

United States Postal Service
Election Mail & Political Mail Guidebook
2022

Election Mail and Political Mail Guidebook

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Postal Service is responsible for processing, transporting, and delivering the nation's Election Mail. The Postal Service is committed to fulfilling our role in the electoral process when public policy makers choose to utilize the mail as a part of their election system. We provide election officials with a secure, efficient and effective means to enable citizens to participate in elections. We employ a robust and proven process to ensure proper handling of all Election Mail, including ballots.

This Election Mail and Political Mail Guidebook provides employees with many of the key resources that explain the longstanding special handling procedures required to facilitate the timely processing and delivery of Election Mail. It also includes many of the policies and procedures for ensuring proper documentation of both Election Mail and Political Mail as it moves through the Postal network. Information intended for external stakeholders, such as Kit 600, Publication 631, Publication 632, or other tools for elections officials to better understand how to use the mail as a part of the voting process can be found at www.usps.com/electionmail.

We anticipate seeing high volumes of Election Mail volume during the 2022 General Election cycle. In order to ensure the Postal Service is operationally prepared to process, transport, and deliver Election Mail and to support Election Mail stakeholders, the Postal Service has established a permanent Election and Government Mail Services team that is responsible for coordinating Election Mail policies, resources, and preparedness, including making any adjustments following the recent organizational restructuring. This document explains that new organization and the collaborative cross-functional process the Postal Service has in place to meet our commitments to supporting the nation's Election Mail. We encourage employees to familiarize themselves with this document and to ask their manager if they have any questions about their role in the timely processing and delivery of Election Mail.

DEFINITIONS

Election Mail

Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. Election Mail includes:

- Mail-in ballots
- Balloting materials
- Voter registration cards
- Mail-in ballot applications
- Polling place notifications

Election Mail should not be confused with Political Mail. The Postal Service maintains separate policies and procedures for Election Mail and Political Mail, though certain procedures and documentation tools do overlap.

The Official Election Mail logo

The Official Election Mail logo is a unique registered trademark designed exclusively for inclusion in the design of official Election Mail. Election officials are not required to use the logo, but the logo does appear on most Election Mail. When the Official Election Mail logo appears on a mailpiece, voters recognize the mail as important and distinct from partisan political mailings. Additionally, the logo serves to identify official Election Mail for Postal Service workers and distinguishes it from the millions of other mailpieces that are processed daily.

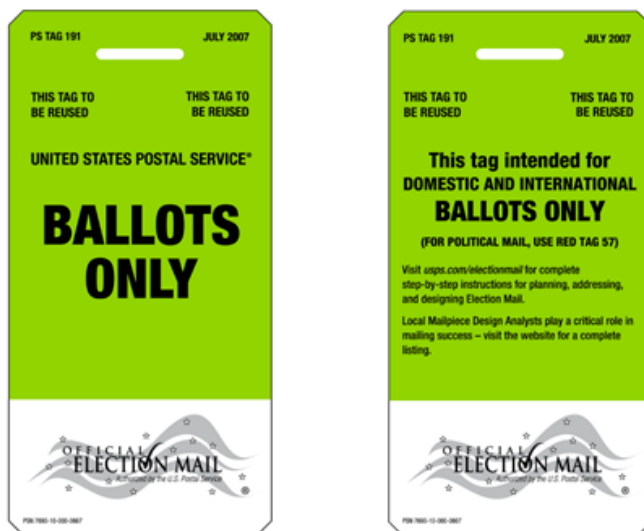
The Official Election Mail logo should be used on any mailpiece created by an election official that is mailed to or from a citizen of the United States for the purpose of participating in the voting process, although use of the logo is optional. This includes balloting materials, voter registration cards, ballot applications, polling place notifications and voter reply mail. The logo should be used on all classes of mail and all processing categories. Postal employees should familiarize themselves with the Official Election Mail logo and follow the Election Mail handling procedures described in this document when they see it in the mailstream. Learn more about the Official Election Mail logo in Publication 631, *Official Election Mail— Graphic Guidelines and Logos*, [here](#).



Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*

Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*, is a green container tag that may be used by election officials to identify trays and sacks of ballot mail destined for either domestic or international addresses. It should be used by election officials to help improve the visibility of ballots as they enter processing and distribution operations. Postal employees should familiarize themselves with Tag 191 and follow the ballot handling procedures described in the relevant

operational instructions when they see it in the mailstream. Tag 191 cannot be used for sample ballots.



Service Type Identifiers (STIDs)

The Postal Service has developed customized Service Type Identifiers (STIDs) specifically for ballots to improve ballot mail visibility. These STIDs have proven instrumental in identifying and tracking ballots on-hand and in the mailstream. In addition, STIDs have increased the visibility of outbound and return ballot mail within the automation environment. STID processing leverages Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) scan data that is available via Informed Visibility (IV) reports.

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act Materials (No Postage Required)

Balloting materials, such as postcard applications, ballots, voting instructions, and return envelopes, may be sent through the mail without prepayment of postage to active military personnel, their eligible spouses and dependents, and U.S. citizens residing abroad. Certain other individuals may be eligible. The absentee ballot provisions for mailing without postage are for elections for federal office. They are not for local elections. For more information, review Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) Section [703.8.8](#).

Political Mail

Political Mail is any material mailed for campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee or committee of a political party, as well as any material mailed by a political action committee or organization engaging in issues advocacy or voter mobilization. According to the DMM, a registered political candidate or party is an individual or organization recognized by a government election control authority (national, state, or local).

Political Mail may be sent for any public election—partisan or nonpartisan—for which there is a ballot. Political Mail may be identified using red Tag 57, Political Campaign Mailing.

[Political Mail](#) should not be confused with Election Mail. The Postal Service maintains separate policies and procedures for Election Mail and Political Mail, though certain procedures and documentation tools do overlap.

Tag 57, Political Campaign Mailing

A red container tag designed to provide visibility to any form of Political Mail while it's in the mailstream. It can be used for any political campaign mailing or political message mailing.



FORMS:

Delivery Unit Election Mail/Policial Mail Log

Please retain copies of each mailing and retain all log for 6 years

Office/Zip Code:

[illegible]

Plant Located BMEU Election Mail/Political Mail Log						Office: BMEU/DMU									
Please retain copies of each mailing and retain all log for 6 years															
Political Mail <u>or</u> Election Mail (PM / EM)	Permit No.	Name of Candidate, Committee, or Mailer (try to be descriptive)	Date/Time Rec'd at Office	No. of Pieces	Class of Mail (Std., 1C, etc.)	Processing Category	BMEU Empl. Who Ensured Mail was Tagged and Notified BME Supv.	PVDS Job (Y/N)	Does Mailing Claim Automation Rates?	If mailing claims automation rates, does mailpiece meet auto-compatible standards?	(-----) "N/A" if it's a PVDS Mailing ----- Signature of Plant Supervisor Taking Responsibility for the Mail			Date/Time of Dispatch to Workfloor	Location in Plant Where Plant Supv. Directed Mail be Brought to
1)															
2)															
3)															
4)															
5)															
6)															
7)															
8)															
9)															
10)															
11)															
12)															
13)															
14)															
15)															
16)															
17)															

BMEU Election Mail/Political Mail Log

Please retain copies of each mailing and retain all log for 6 years

Office:

Political Mail <u>or</u> Election Mail (PM / EM)	Permit No.	Name of Candidate, Committee, or Mailer (try to be descriptive)	Date/Time Rec'd at Office	No. of Pieces	Class of Mail (Std, 1C, etc.)	Processing Category	BMEU Empl. Who Ensured Mail was Tagged and Notified BME Supv.	PVDS Job (Y/N)	Does Mailing Claim Automation Rates?	If mailing claims automation rates, does mailpiece meet auto- compatible standards?	(----- "N/A" if it's a PVDS Mailing -----)		
											Signature of Plant Supervisor Taking Responsibility for the Mail	Date/Time of Dispatch to Workfloor	Location in Plant Where Plant Supv. Directed Mail be Brought to
1)													
2)													
3)													
4)													
5)													
6)													
7)													
8)													
9)													
10)													
11)													
12)													
13)													
14)													
15)													
16)													
17)													
18)													
19)													

Operational Clean Sweep Search Checklist

Political and Election Mail

Purpose: To provide an operational checklist to be used in performing a mail search.
When completed - return to the Manager of Customer Relations and District BSN

District:_____ **Date**_____ **Name**_____

Title_____ **Phone#:**_____

Check box when checked	Section/Operation: <i>Defines the work area to be searched.</i>	Comments: <i>Specifics: include copies of PMOD label and /or container placard. Names of individuals contacted</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incoming dock	
<input type="checkbox"/>	BMEU & BMEU Plant Staging	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opening Units	
<input type="checkbox"/>	AO / Station dispatch area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outbound dock	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outgoing Dispatch Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trailers in the yard (Yard Check)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	MTE Plant Staging Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	MTE Trailers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site MTE SC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARS Staging and Operations	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rewrap Operations	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CFS (if applicable)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	BRM/Postage Due	

Auditor_____ Position_____ Date_____

Delivery Unit Election Mail and Political Mail Checklist					
Manager/Supervisor Name:					
Date:					
Office Name:					
ZIP Code of Office:					
District:					
	Retail Counter	Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate and findings)
1	Has the retail area been cleared of all outgoing mail and dispatched?				
2	Have all units, collection boxes, including lobby drops been collected and dispatched on every available transportation? Including the final dispatch of value (DOV), and does CPMS show all points collected?				
3	Has all Election Mail been consolidated with outgoing collection mail and not held out separately or trayed? Check retail counter (on top and under), collection prep area, PO Box section, Dutch Door area, Supervisor desk, mPOS cart (if applicable), distribution cases, hotcase, throwback case, and lobby drop boxes.				
	Back Office	Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate and findings)
4	Does the unit maintain a Headquarters-approved Political/Election Mail log and is it current with sample photocopies? (Record date of last entry)				
5	Is the unit familiar with the required service talks? Are they posted on the workroom floor and being shared with employees?				
6	Does the unit know how to handle military, overseas, and absentee ballots?				
7	Does the delivery unit have a contingency plan to deliver late arriving/missent Political Mail/Election Mail?				
8	Is the unit clear of Business Reply Mail (BRM) today? If no, comment.				
9	Does the unit have the Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Short Paid Ballots memos posted near the area where the BRM is worked?				
10	Are the postage due/short paid Election Mail procedures being followed? Absentee ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment. DO NOT delay delivery of balloting materials. Willful delay of absentee balloting material or other Election Mail is a violation of policies, ethics, and law.				
11	Is the unit free of curtailed and delayed Political Mail/Election Mail? (Distribution case, Carriers Case, Hotcase, Flat case, RFS location, PO Box section, and supervisor's desk)				
12	If there was delayed/curtailed Political Mail/Election Mail, was it properly reported in Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV), identified on your HQ approved political log, and your district customer relations managers notified?				
13	Is all available mail being dispatched on the earliest possible transportation?				
14	Are back door audits and satchel checks being conducted to ensure all Election Mail has been dispatched? Check all empty MTE prior to dispatching: (check trays and tubs and turn sacks inside out)				
15	Are all delivery and collection vehicles checked in the PM verified to be free of Political Mail and Election Mail?				
16	Is the Political Mail/Election Mail "All Clear" certification being completed daily?				
	Carrier Cases	Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate and findings)
17	Are carrier cases clear of Political Mail and Election Mail? Are carriers aware of the policy to hold unknown recipient mail for ten days before returning to sender?				
18	Are carrier cases clear of mailpieces overlooked after strapping out?				
19	Has management verified that non-forwardable Political Mail and Election Mail is not co-mingled with Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM)? Non-forwardable includes: unendorsed non-profit, standard, marketing mail, Address Service Requested (ASR), Change Service Requested (CSR), Electronic Service Requested (ESR), Forward Service Requested (FSR), Return Service Requested (RSR) and Temp-Return Service Requested (TRSR).				
20	Is Undeliverable as Addressed (UAA) and Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) [reference DMM 507.1.1] being properly recorded on the Headquarters-approved Destination Delivery Unit (DDU) log?				

	Additional Process Checks	Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate and findings)
21	Is Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) carrier cases and PO Box section being worked/processed daily?				
22	Is Undeliverable as Address (UAA) – letters (PARS) and flats (FPARS) trayed, and parcels processed in RFS and dispatched to the plant?				
23	If the unit has an on-site Bulk Mail Entry Unit (BMEU), is a Headquarters-approved Political/Election Mail log present and current with sample photocopies?				
24	Are Red Tag 191, <i>Political Campaign Mailing</i> and/or Green Tag 191, <i>Domestic and International Ballots</i> being used in the unit to identify Political Mail and/or Election Mail? Tag 57 is used to identify containers with Political Mail in it. Tag 191 is the tag used to identify Ballot Mail. This tag is only used on trays or sacks.				
25	Are Contract Postal Units, Village Post Offices, and Community Post Offices cleared of all outgoing mail and dispatched?				

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Political and Election Mail Audit Checklist



Facility NAME/Auditor's NAME: _____

Enter responses in spaces provided. Any Y/N question answered as "No" requires an entry in section 31 below.

General Information / Communication: (TO BE COMPLETED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE PROCESSING WINDOW)

1	MGMT - Has the site certified that ALL Service Talks and POMOs were shared with ALL employees?	Yes		No		N/A	
2	OPS - Was the daily all clear check completed and certified after each tour and end of day on the website?	Yes		No		N/A	
3	OPS - Is there a designated Political and Election Mail Staging area?	Yes		No		N/A	
4	OPS - Is the staging space clearly identified with proper lines and signs?	Yes		No		N/A	
5	OPS - Does the plant have Political and Election mail properly staged in the designated staging area as applicable?	Yes		No		N/A	
6	OPS - Was the Political and Election mail correctly reported on the appropriate MCV Manual Line item?	Yes		No		N/A	
7	OPS - Is ALL Election mail being cancelled on the AFCSSs, AFSMs or hand cancellation?	Yes		No		N/A	
8	OPS - Has operations correctly documented their Political and Election Mail arrivals into the P/E log?	Yes		No		N/A	
9	OPS - Are all P/E mail alerts being shared and documented in the log upon arrival?	Yes		No		N/A	
10	OPS - Are all containers with P/E mail properly identified indicating that there is P/E mail in that container?	Yes		No		N/A	
11	OPS - Have the POMOs and Service talks been posted on the workroom floor?	Yes		No		N/A	
12	OPS - Are the employees knowledgeable about the POMOs and Service Talks for Political and Election Mail?	Yes		No		N/A	
13	OPS - Are the BRM Political and Election Mail procedures being followed?	Yes		No		N/A	
14	OPS - Are the POSTAGE DUE Election Mail procedures being followed - DELIVER THE MAIL/DO NOT RTS?	Yes		No		N/A	
15	OPS - Do the employees know what to do with a container with a Tag 57 or 191?	Yes		No		N/A	
16	OPS - Does the site know how to handle the Military/Overseas/Absentee ballots?	Yes		No		N/A	
17	OPS - Have manual operations including Shortpaid, Damaged mail and PARS been swept for all P/E mail?	Yes		No		N/A	
18	OPS - Have trailer yard checks being completed in each tour including trailers at the dock?	Yes		No		N/A	
19	OPS/BMEU - Do the OPS and BMEU teams meet to compare and validate the Political and Election mail logs?	Yes		No		N/A	
20	BMEU - Is the BMEU Political and Election mail logs up to date and current?	Yes		No		N/A	
21	IPS - Is IV reviewed daily to assess Political and Election Mail Performance?	Yes		No		N/A	
22	IPS - Did IPS audit the MCV counts and validate the counts and oldest dates on the floor?	Yes		No		N/A	
23	IPS - Are mail conditions and All Clear certification being reviewed and discussed at the daily tour turnover meetings?	Yes		No		N/A	
24	IPS - Is IPS reviewing Election Mail ballot envelopes that reject from the AFCSSs and communicating findings to the District Strike Team?	Yes		No		N/A	
25	COORDINATOR - Does the site have a local Political and Election mail plan?	Yes		No		N/A	
26	COORDINATOR - Does the local P/E mail plan include a contingency plan to get LAMM and delayed P/E mail delivered to the customer?	Yes		No		N/A	
27	COORDINATOR - Does the plant and District Strike Team meet regularly?	Yes		No		N/A	
29	COORDINATOR - Are all issues being entered with detailed documentation in the HQ Issue Log?	Yes		No		N/A	
30	COORDINATOR - Are the issues/problems from Electionmail.org being resolved within 24 hrs (where applicable)?	Yes		No		N/A	

31 For any "No" response in the Y/N items, provide the changes necessary to abate the issue below and when that action will be completed:

Official Election Mail and Political Mail Issues Report

When issues are detected for any Political Mail or Official Election Mail, an Issues Report must be completed and forwarded to the Manager Business Mail Entry, who will forward to the District Manager of Customer Relations.

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Issue Report</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">for Official Election Mail or Political Campaign Mail</h3>	
<p>Note: This report may be initiated by a mailer inquiry or by a Postal Service employee.</p>	
Report Filing Information	
<p>Type of Mailing (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Official Election Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Political Campaign Mail</p>	
<p>Date Issue Reported: _____</p>	
<p>Person Reporting the Issue: _____ Phone: _____</p>	
<p>Office Name: _____</p>	
Mailpiece Details	
<p>Permit No: _____ Office Where Permit is Held: _____</p>	
<p>Name of Permit Holder: _____</p>	
<p>Phone/Address/Contact Information on Mailpiece:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Contact name (if known): _____</p>	
Issue Details	
<p>Briefly explain the problem: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Explain the resolution and status: _____</p>	
PLEASE RETURN A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE DISTRICT MANAGER OF CUTOMER RELATIONS	

Official Election Mail and Political Mail Late Arriving Report

For any Political Campaign Mail (PCM) or Official Election Mail (OEM) that arrives after the BMEU has closed, the following form must be completed and forwarded to the local Manager, Business Mail Entry, who will forward to the District Manager of Customer Relations.

- The MBME will forward the *Late Arriving Report* to the District Manager of Customer Relations who will forward the report to the Area Election Mail Field Specialist.

Late Arriving Report for Official Election Mail or Political Campaign Mail	
Report Filing Information	
Type of Mailing (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Official Election Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Political Campaign Mail	
Date Issue Reported: _____	
Person Reporting the Issue: _____ Phone: _____	
Office Name: _____ ZIP Code _____	
Mailpiece Details	
Permit No: _____ Office Where Permit is Held: _____	
Name of Permit Holder: _____	
Phone/Address/Contact Information on Mailpiece:	

Contact name (if known): _____	
Acceptance Details	
Date and Time Mail Arrived at Office: _____	
Sack/Tray/Tub Count: _____ Estimated Number of Pieces: _____	
Disposition of Mail: _____	

Explain when and how the mail was discovered:: _____	

PLEASE RETURN A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE DISTRICT MANAGER OF CUSTOMER RELATIONS	

KEY ELECTION MAIL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

With the 2022 General Election fast approaching, the intent of this guidebook is to provide you with resources needed to accept, transport, process, and deliver Election Mail timely and efficiently. It is vital that we adhere to our core policies and procedures as we handle an increased number of ballots this year.

The resources below from the Election and Government Mail Services Blue Page can be printed directly from this file or accessed online from the Election Mail page on Blue. Additional resources will be included in this document as they are developed. Management should ensure that all employees have this information readily available in all postal facilities and that these policies and procedures are strictly adhered to.

LINKS TO STAND UP TALKS AND STANDARD WORK INSTRUCTIONS ON BLUE

Standup Talks	Standard Work Instructions
AFSM IJC Start Button	AFSM Ballot Handling
AFSM Postmark Validation	All Clear Certification for Delivery Units
Board of Elections Firm Riffle	BRM Election Day Processing
Empty Equipment Search and Tag 57 & 191 Handling	Carrier Responsibilities
Flat BRM Handling	Clearing Election Political Mail Retail Delivery Units
Hand Cancellation Quality	Election Day Hand to Hand Exchange Local Manager
Hand Cancellation Stamp	F4 Distribution Clerk Responsibilities - Election Mail
Handling Damaged Ballots	F4 Distribution Clerk Responsibilities - Political Mail
Absentee Ballots with Insufficient Postage	Handling Mail-In Ballots with Insufficient or No Postage
Handling Political and Election Mail UBBM	Handling Missent Ballots
Mail Anywhere Program	Handling UBBM Election Mail and Political Mail
Military Overseas Absentees Ballots	Maintaining the Election and Political Mail Log
No Voter-Returned Ballots in PARS	Military and Overseas Absentee Ballots
Processing Mixed Outgoing Election Mail	Pitch Catch Clear Process for Election Ballots
Processing Political Mail	PM Backdoor Audit & Vehicle Check - Election Mail and Political Mail
Return Ballots with No Address	
Tag 191 for Ballot Mail	

STAND UP TALKS

Stand-Up Talk: Handling Damaged Ballots

Ballot Mail volume has increased in recent years, and we expect that large numbers of election officials and voters will continue using the mail as part of the electoral process this year. While every effort is made to deliver ballots intact, unfortunately some pieces will be damaged in mail processing equipment.

If a ballot is damaged, every effort should be made to quickly locate all the pieces of the ballot. If the ballot can be reassembled, carefully tape the pieces and place in a damaged mail bag or envelope for delivery. If only part of the ballot can be found, place in a damaged mail bag or envelope and deliver what is possible.

Facilities must stay current with processing damaged mail and should not incur delays. Handle the damaged mail as soon as it is generated. The sooner it is handled, the better the chance of locating all of the pieces.



Stand-Up Talk: Handling Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) for Election Mail and Political Mail

During the 2022 Election season, Election Mail and Political Mail volume will increase. Some of these mailpieces will be undeliverable as addressed, and it is critical that they are handled correctly to protect the sanctity of the election and maintain the public's trust in the Postal Service. This policy is an update to an SWI and SUT on UBBM for Election Mail and Political Mail issued earlier this year.



IMAGE 1 – Official Election Mail Logo



IMAGE 2 – Tag 191,
Domestic and International Ballots

Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process — including ballots, voter registration cards, absentee voting applications and polling place notifications. Election Mail can be sent by election officials to voters using First-Class Mail or Marketing Mail and can be visually identified in the mailstream by the Official Election Mail Logo, which is authorized for use only on official Election Mail.

Election Mail should not be confused with Political Mail, which is any material mailed for campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee or committee of a political party, as well as any material mailed by a political action committee or organization engaging in issues advocacy or voter mobilization. Political Mail can be sent using First-Class Mail, Marketing Mail, or Every Door Direct Mail and can be visually identified in the mailstream by Tag 57.



IMAGE 3 – Tag 57

Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) is Marketing Mail that is undeliverable as addressed and does not contain an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are used by mailers to give direction on whether they want electronic or manual notification of the customer's updated information as well as the reason the piece is undeliverable. They also provide the Postal Service with instructions on how to handle undeliverable mailpieces. The endorsements consist of one of the following keywords: "address," "forwarding," "return," or "change," followed by the two words "service requested." UBBM includes mail which has no human-readable ancillary service endorsement as well as mail which is endorsed Electronic Service Requested (ESR) but has no mailer-applied Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb). It also includes ESR where the IMb is completely obliterated.

Normally, UBBM is sent to the local plant for recycling, but there are special handling processes in place for Election Mail UBBM.

- **For Election Mail UBBM:** Extra precautions must be taken to ensure Election Mail is handled in accordance with the needs and expectations of the relevant Board of Election. Delivery Unit Employees and CIOSS Host Site Waste Mail Verification Employees should give Election Mail UBBM to their Supervisor or Manager who must contact the District Customer Relations who, in coordination with the District Strike Team, will contact the relevant Board of Elections for guidance. The District Customer Relations Manager will determine whether the Board of Election wants the pieces back. If they do not, the Customer Relations Manager may approve the disposal of the pieces as UBBM with correlating placards.
- **For Political Mail UBBM:** Retail and Delivery employees should validate that the piece is undeliverable Marketing Mail and contains no ancillary service endorsements. Log all UBBM Political Mail according to the "*Maintaining Political/Election Mail Log*" Standard Work Instruction. Once it is confirmed and logged appropriately, Political Mail UBBM should be handled in the same manner as other UBBM and sent to the local plant for recycling.


Stand-Up Talk: Mail Anywhere Program

As a reminder, The Postal Service has launched the “Mail Anywhere” service that allows a customer to use the same permit at every mailing location across the country.

This service is available to customers who have mailed at 90% Full-Service for the customer’s given business location and have met the electronic Full-Service verification criteria during the month before they requested to participate in the Mail Anywhere program.

The “Mail Anywhere” program is a benefit to Full-Service customers and allows them to use a single permit to present Full-Service or mixed Full-Service mailings at any Business Mail Acceptance site. This simplifies permit management and enables the customer to maintain a single permit to enter and pay for mailings.

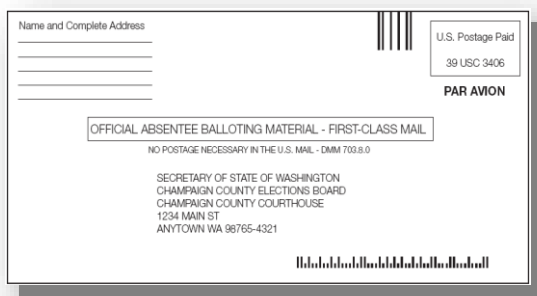
As a result of this program, mailers may enter origin mailings whose labels do not match the site at which their mailings are entered. For example, the mailing below was entered at North Metro P&DC with an OMX Albany label. This was not a crossdock pallet to Albany, but rather an Origin Mixed mailing containing trays for a variety of destinations. **It is important for drop shipment personnel and others who come in contact with this mail to understand that the OMX and MXD mailings are working containers, regardless of the site name on the mailing. They must be processed at the local OMX and MXD site respectively.**

OMX ALBANY, NY 120		The following was dropped in North Metro P&DC instead of Albany NY. This is confusing dock employees because the assumption is made that this is cross dock when in it is really working mail
FCM LTRS WKG		
<small>Origin Mailer: Albany NY 12206</small>		
■ EINDUCTION ■ USPS SCAN REQUIRED ■ EINDUCTION ■		
		
<small>99 M 107594 00000001FLU</small>		
<hr/>		
Job Number:	011115	
Pallet No:	000008	2 ft EMM Trays: 30
		The contents contained mail for the Atlanta campus as well as other MXD states locations

Stand-Up Talk: Military & Overseas Absentee Ballots

This election season, the Military Postal Service, Department of Defense, and USPS are combining efforts to expedite the delivery of absentee ballots to and from military personnel and citizens residing in foreign countries. The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE Act) and Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) provide a general standard for how the USPS handles military and overseas ballots. The following is a quick summary of the USPS policy on military and overseas absentee ballots based on the DMM, UOCAVA and the MOVE Act:

- Balloting materials for elections for federal office may be sent through the mail without prepayment of postage to enable individuals to participate in the electoral process where they are otherwise eligible to vote and are (1) in active service in the Uniformed Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and commissioned corps of the Public Health Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration); (2) in the Merchant Marines; (3) a spouse or dependent of a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marines; or (4) a United States citizen residing outside the United States. Qualifying mailpieces may be mailed without prepayment of postage by depositing them in the domestic mailstream or mailing them from an overseas U.S. military Post Office (APO/FPO), a Diplomatic Post Office (DPO), or an American Embassy or American Consulate.
- Policy applies to the following elections: general, primary, and special elections for Federal office
- States are generally required to mail absentee ballots to military and overseas voters no later than 45 days before a federal election (September 24 is 45 days before the November 8 election)
- Priority Mail Express service Label 11-DoD may be utilized by absent overseas uniformed services voters when mailed from a Military Post Office, Diplomatic Post Office, or Department of State locations
- Ballots sent to eligible voters with the “39 U.S.C. 3406” indicia do not require postage and are not short paid (DMM 703.8.0)
- Ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment (POM 171.3)
- Acceptance clerks and retail associates must accept this mail
- This mail does not have to be submitted to a BMEU
- Ballots not covered by this policy require postage prior to mailing, but **do not detain** due to short-paid postage



Absentee Ballot with 39 USC 3406 in Postage Box



Absentee Ballot with Priority Mail Express Label from Military Post Office

The Official Election Mail Logo may also be present on all absentee ballots.

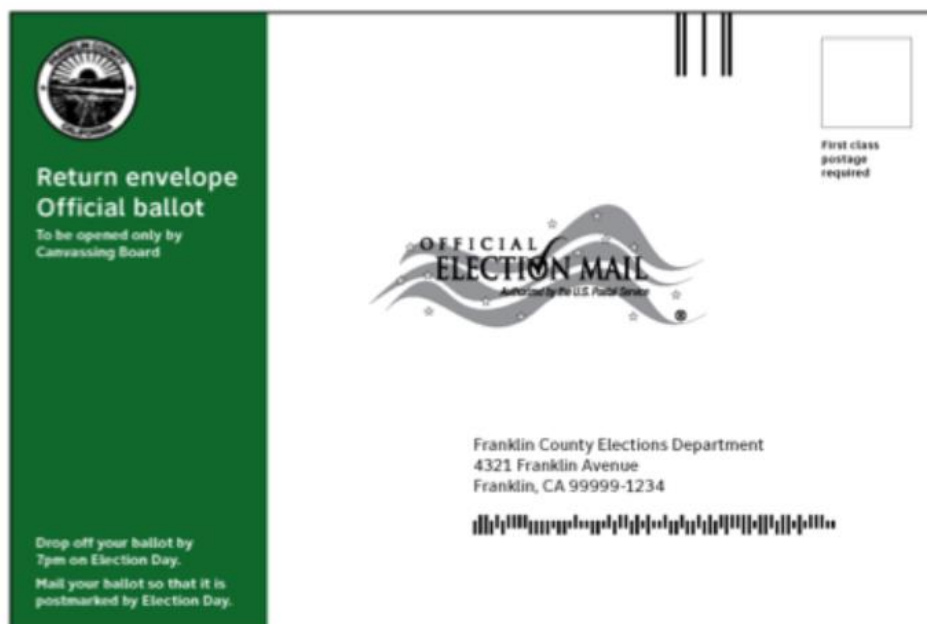
Stand-Up Talk: No Voter-Returned Ballots in PARS

With the 2022 elections fast approaching, ballot mail volume is on the rise. Our customers are depending on USPS to expeditiously deliver all voter-returned ballots to ensure the integrity of the election.

Voter-returned ballots are addressed to election jurisdictions and should never be return-to-sender. It is critical that they are processed in the regular mailstream and do not end up in PARS. This requires vigilance in all steps of the process:

- Delivery must ensure ballots are prepped with stamped mail. Do not hold out separately or tray up with metered mail. For extra security, sleeve or lid PARS mail to avoid comingling.
- Employees working in the collection operation or plant carwash must look out for any ballot mail and ensure it flows with the stamped mailstream.
- Employees prepping PARS and FPARS must check for any voter-returned ballots and redirect as necessary.
- Manual case employees should check RTS (return-to-sender) volumes for any voter-returned ballots and redirect as necessary.

Any mailpiece design or barcode issues should be reported to the local District Strike Team.



Stand-Up Talk: Processing Mixed Outgoing Election Mail

Each Election season, voters and election officials count on the Postal Service to deliver Election Mail as expeditiously as possible. Official Election Mail includes mail-in ballots sent to or from domestic, overseas, and military voters, as well as ballot materials, voter registration cards, ballot applications, and polling place notifications.

Any facility receiving outbound Election Mail to voters in mixed outgoing (MXD or OMX) trays/tubs should process it as First-Class Mail (FCM), regardless of the class in which it is entered (Marketing Mail, Non-Profit, etc.). Mail processing facilities will establish identified containers in their opening units (Collection Platform, Inbound Dock, BMEU, 010, etc.) to isolate and identify all bundles, trays, or sacks of outbound Election Mail received. Processing facilities will containerize Election Mail letters and flats in separate containers, with letter mail containers flowed directly to the outgoing FCM primary letter operations (DBCS/DIOSS 271, 481, 891, etc.) and flat mail flowed directly to the outgoing FCM primary flat operations (AFSM 141, 331, 461, etc.). If no automated/mechanized equipment is available, the volumes will be processed in the outgoing FCM manual letter operation or outgoing FCM manual flat operation. DO NOT induct letter trays or flat trays of Election Mail across tray sorters, ATUs, Gantry robots, or TMS. Election Mail volumes will be isolated, identified, and flowed directly to the FCM outgoing distribution operation.

Any Election Mail volume received at facilities without outgoing FCM letter or flat operations (destination plants, NDCs, separate BMEUs, etc.) will identify and containerize the Election Mail as FCM and route the container to their designated outgoing processing facility on the next available trip for distribution.

Any Network Distribution Center (NDC) receiving Election Mail will isolate the Election Mail for processing as First-Class Mail (FCM), regardless of class. NDC will establish identified containers in their opening units (Inbound Dock, BMEU, etc.) to isolate and identify all bundles, trays (extracted from MXD NDC Pallets), or sacks of Election Mail received. Each facility will identify and containerize the Election Mail as FCM and route the container to their designated outgoing processing facility on the next available trip for distribution. DO NOT mix Election Mail with other classes of mail (Marketing Mail, Package Services, etc.) when dispatching to the outgoing processing facility.

Stand-Up Talk: Handling Ballots with Insufficient or No Postage

From now until the November elections, we can expect to see ballots in the mail. All mail-in ballots, except those bearing the indicia “*US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406*,” require postage. Nonetheless, some ballots will be shortpaid and some will contain no postage at all. It is critical that this mail is handled correctly to avoid any negative impact on election results or the Postal Service.

Please be aware that balloting materials are handled differently from other unpaid or shortpaid mailpieces as directed by [Postal Operations Manual section 171.3](#):

- Ballots addressed to an election office, with or without sufficient postage, must be delivered.
- Ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment.

All employees must adhere to Postal Service policy as follows:

- Shortpaid and unpaid absentee balloting materials must **never** be returned to the voter for additional postage. The Postal Service will attempt to collect postage from the election office upon delivery or at a later date. Do not delay delivery of balloting materials.
- Account for ballots with insufficient or no postage using existing procedures for postage due mail. Attempt to collect the postage due from the election office at the time of delivery. **However, absentee ballots must be delivered even if the receiving election office refuses to pay.**
- If the election office refuses to pay, record the number of ballots and the amount due.
- Military and overseas absentee ballots bearing indicia “**US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406**” are not shortpaid and no additional postage is needed. [DMM 703.8.0](#).

Willful delay of absentee balloting material or other election material is a violation of policy, ethics, and law.

If you have questions or concerns about handling absentee balloting material, contact your supervisor.

Please do your part to ensure all absentee balloting materials in the mail are handled promptly. With your help, the Postal Service will be able to retain this valuable mail volume.

Stand-Up Talk: AFSM IJC Start Button

Our customers depend on USPS to provide accurate postmarks on collection mail. This is particularly important during the election season. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed. This is especially critical in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted.

All flat-shaped collection mail should be identified and processed on an AFSM 100 canceller module with the canceller turned on. **It is absolutely imperative that the IJC (Ink Jet Cancellor) START button is pressed before beginning the cancellation run.** Once the START button is depressed, the green light will stay on solid and any mailpiece that passes through the infeed, crossing the photosensor, will receive a cancellation mark.



Collection mail **must not** be processed on an AFSM 100 module without an IJC. Operations and Maintenance should validate that the canceller is printing the correct date on the postmark. Maintenance must follow all parts of MMO-127-12 Operational and Preventive Maintenance Guidelines for Automated Flat Sorter Machine 100 Ink Jet Cancellor (IJCAFSM). The IJC STOP button should be pressed once it is confirmed that all collection flats have been processed.

A green light on top of the IJC indicates that the job is loaded and started and that the printhead is fully engaged. A yellow/amber light shows that there is a non-fatal fault such as low ink or low temperature. A red light indicates a fatal fault that causes cancellation to halt. Refer to the table below.

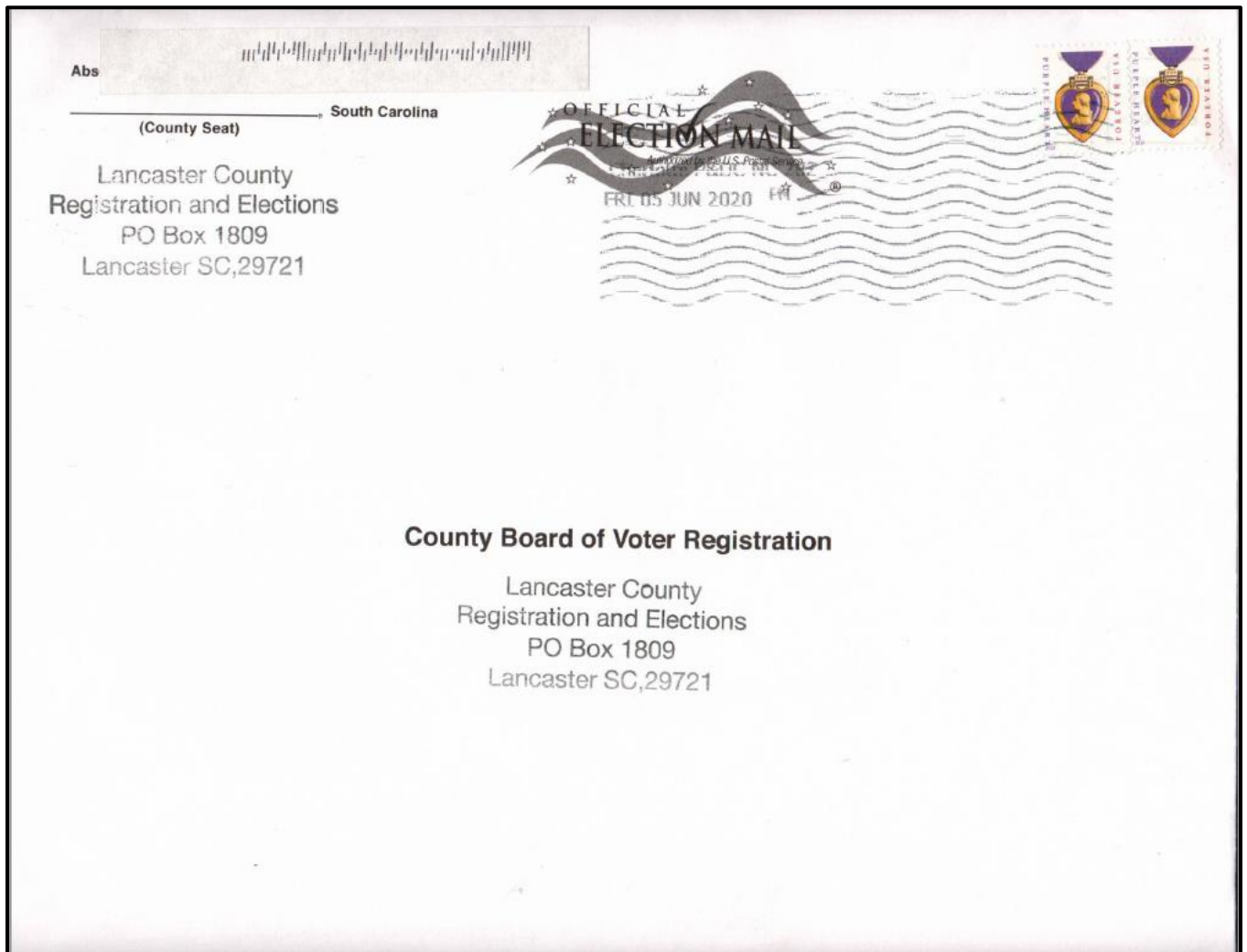
IJC Control Panel Lamp Indicators

LAMP COLOR	INDICATOR	MEANING
Green	Blinking	Job Loaded, Job Started and printhead fully engaged; IJC ready to press IJC Control Panel Start button.
	Steady On	Job Loaded and Job Started, printhead fully engaged, IJC Control Panel Start button pressed.
	Blinking or Steady On but printhead not fully engaged	Fatal fault; canceling halts
Amber	Lit	Non-fatal fault such as ink low or low temperature
Red	Lit	Fatal fault; canceling halts

AFSM Postmark Validation

From now through the general election on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, we can expect to process a high volume of ballot mail. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed, so it is essential that every returning ballot gets a legible postmark with the correct date – meaning the date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot. This is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted.

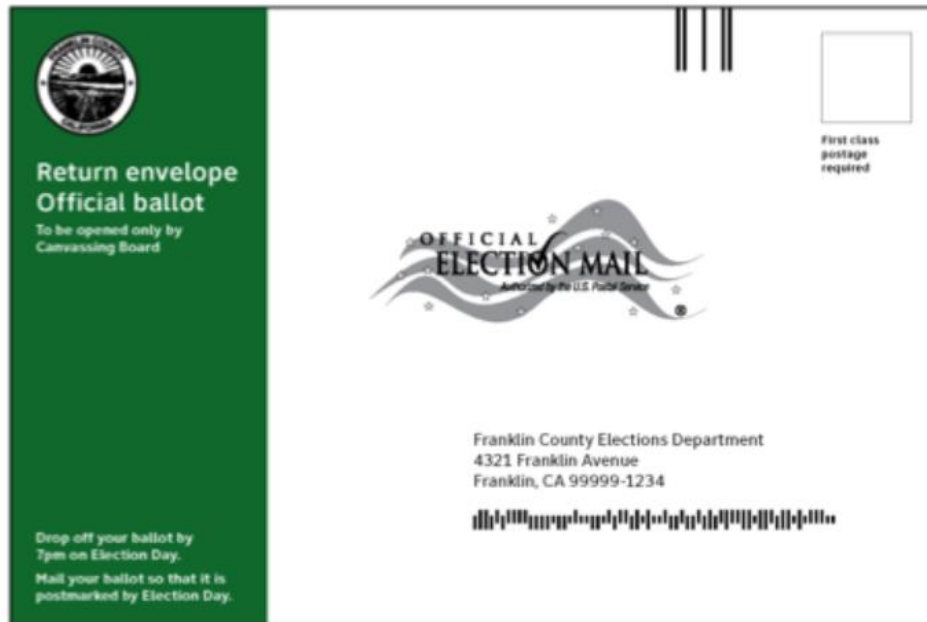
Postmarks from the AFSM IJC (Ink Jet Cancellor) should be spot-checked daily for correctness and legibility. If the date is not correct or readable, cancellation must stop immediately until the issue is resolved. Work with Maintenance to address any problems. If the issue is unable to be resolved prior to dispatch, hand cancellation must be used as a contingency.



Stand-Up Talk: Board of Elections Firm Riffle

In the last few years ballot mail volume has been increasing, and we expect to see high volumes of ballot mail during the 2022 election season. We must focus on the timely and accurate delivery of ballots to election jurisdictions.

Destinating units serving the address of the Board of Elections (BOE) must complete a 100% quality riffle of mail destined for the BOE. This is to ensure mail not intended for the BOE (outgoing mail, mail for other BOEs, etc.) is not inadvertently delivered to the BOE. This includes unique ZIP codes and caller service units, or wherever the ballots are finalized before tender to the BOE.



Stand-Up Talk: Processing Political Mail

From now until the general election on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, we can expect to process a high volume of Political Mail as the campaign season intensifies. Today, I am sharing information from the *Postal Operations Manual* (POM) section 492, and mailers' use of PS Tag 57, *Political Campaign Mailing*, that identifies Political Mail for processing and distribution.

First, let's define a political mailing, which is distinct from Election Mail. Political Mail can be Political Campaign Mail or Political Message Mail. Political Campaign Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail postage rates for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, a campaign committee, or a committee of a political party. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate's campaign committee or political party committee as the return address. Political Message Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices by a PAC, super-PAC, or other organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Now, let's familiarize ourselves with PS Tag 57. "Political Campaign Mailing" is printed on the red tag. Six black stars are above and below those words. Use of Tag 57 with eligible political mailings is optional. Tag 57 may be used for all Political Mail, including Political Message Mail. Please remove Tag 57 from trays after the campaign mail has been processed.

The Postal Service is responsible for providing information to assist in the preparation and deposit of political mailings, as well as for the proper acceptance, processing, delivery, and recording of these mailings. Our job is to ensure that each mailing is handled properly and with equal care and attention. Any delay in processing political mailings must be documented. Be alert for the red Tag 57. We must properly handle and timely deliver any political mailing.

In summary, the key points from today's service talk are:

- We will handle all political mailings properly and timely.
- Be alert to the red Tag 57, even though its use is optional for eligible mailers.
- Tag 57 must be removed once the political mail has been processed.
- Any delays in processing of political mail must be reported.

One of the most important public functions for the Postal Service is serving as a trusted partner in our nation's electoral process. Thank you for keeping our country strong by ensuring messages from registered political candidates, committees, parties and other issue advocacy groups are processed in a timely manner so they can be delivered to America's voters.

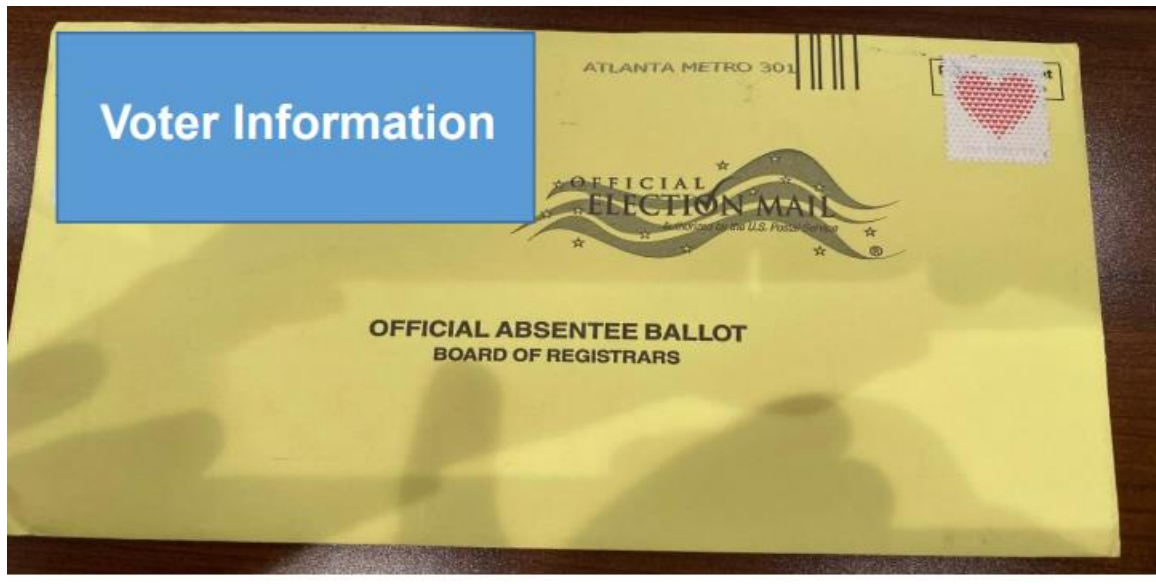


Stand-Up Talk: Return Ballots with No Address

As the 2022 Election season gets underway, you may encounter voter-returned ballots with no Board of Election address, such as the example below. These envelopes usually contain return ballots that were mistakenly entered into the mailstream by the voter who did properly enclose it in the return envelope provided by the Board of Election.

The Postal Service should make every effort to ensure that they are returned to their intended Board of Election.

If you find any such pieces, notify your supervisor and contact your District Manager of Customer Relations, who will coordinate with state and local election officials to identify the intended recipient and coordinate special delivery.



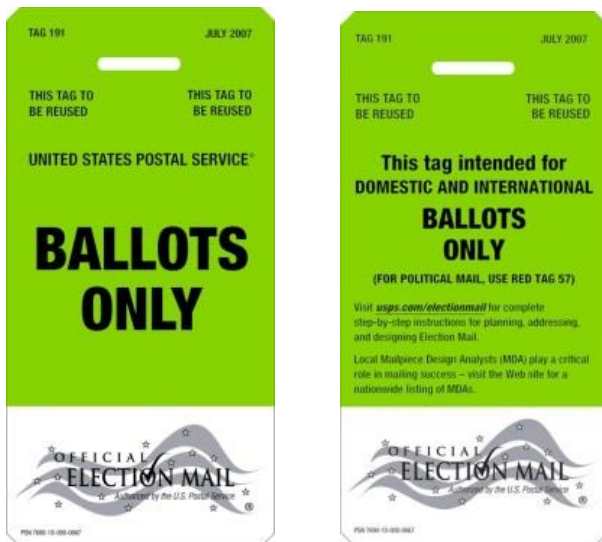
Stand-Up Talk: Tag 191 for Ballot Mail

The Postal Service recommends that election officials use the green **Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots**, to identify trays and sacks that contain ballot mail. Although use of the tag is optional, it provides greater visibility for us to identify the containers of ballot mail as they enter our processing and distribution operations.

The green Tag 191 may be used *only* to identify *ballots* addressed for domestic or international delivery. The tag may not be used to identify containers of other types of Official Election Mail, such as sample ballots, polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other election-related materials. Tag 191 may be used only by election officials and their mail service providers, and may not be used by other organizations or individuals. As information, the mailers are instructed to affix Tag 191 to the mail container as follows:

- **Strapped Letter Trays:**
 - Using a wire twist tie, attach Tag 191 to the strap at the end of the tray that bears the tray label.
- **Non-strapped Letter Trays:**
 - For trays permitted to be tendered without strapping, attach Tag 191 to the tray with a rubber band that is double-looped through the tray handhold at the end that bears the tray label.
- **Sacks with Flat-Size Mail:**
 - Depending on the type of sack, attach Tag 191 to either the strap or label holder on the sack.

It is very important that ballots are identified and processed timely to help ensure voters have time to receive and return their ballots.



Stand-Up Talk: Empty Equipment Search and Tag 57/191 Handling

As the 2022 Election season gets underway, it is crucial that all political and election mail pieces are delivered timely. Some pieces may be overlooked due to being stuck in equipment that appears to be empty. We must avoid this at all costs by performing a thorough empty equipment search.

Once a piece of equipment has been emptied, it should be inspected visually and physically for any residual mailpieces. Sacks should be turned inside-out, trays and tubs should be turned upside-down, hampers should be swept out, etc.

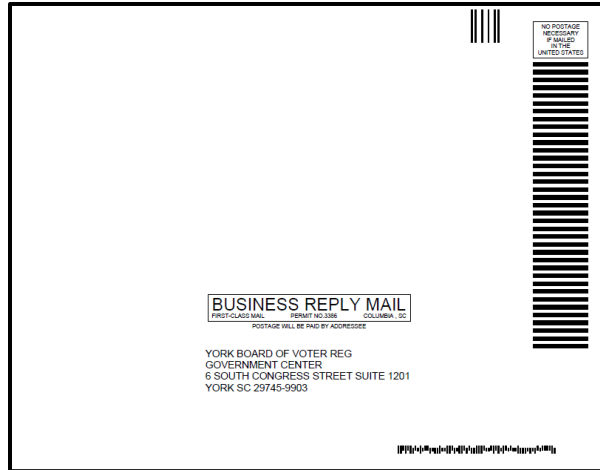
Some pieces of equipment have a false bottom (i.e. trays or tubs are placed in the bottom of a container to make it easier to reach the contents of the container). These types of containers are especially prone to hidden mailpieces. Check for any mailpieces that may be lying underneath the false bottom.

In addition, empty equipment must not be returned to a Mail Transport Equipment Service Center (MTESC) with a red Political Mail Tag 57 or green Ballot Mail Tag 191 attached. These tags must be removed from the tray/tub/sack as soon as the mail in the container is processed. Do not dispose of the tags; return them to the local Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) for reuse.



Stand-Up Talk: Flat BRM Handling

With the 2022 Elections fast approaching, ballot mail volume is on the rise. Many voters will be returning flat-shaped ballot envelopes, some of which are BRM (Business Reply Mail). It is critical that all return ballots receive a postmark, including BRM envelopes. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed. This is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted.



All flat-shaped and oversize letter BRM, including ballots, should be processed with the stamped flat mailflow. If flat BRM is received comingled with metered volume, the BRM must be culled and tubbed up with the stamped flats in the collection operation or plant carwash. **This applies to BRM mail prep always, not just during election season.**

These pieces must be processed on an AFSM 100 canceller module with the IJC (Ink Jet Cancellor) turned on. Flat BRM **must not** be processed on an AFSM 100 module without an IJC or during a run where the IJC is not turned on.



Stand-Up Talk: Hand Cancellation Quality

Ballot Mail volume has increased in recent years, and we expect that large numbers of election officials and voters will continue using the mail as part of the electoral process this year. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed, so it is essential that every returning ballot gets a postmark with the correct date – meaning the date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot. This is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted.

Each plant should keep a supply of manual date stamps to postmark any uncanceled volumes during origin processing. The stamp should be updated to the current date each day at the designated rollover time (06:59), and not before. **The quality of the postmark should be checked to ensure the date is legible.** This is essential to help ensure ballots can be counted. If there is an issue with stamp quality, use a backup stamp or replenish the ink in the stamp.



Stand-Up Talk: Hand Cancellation Stamp

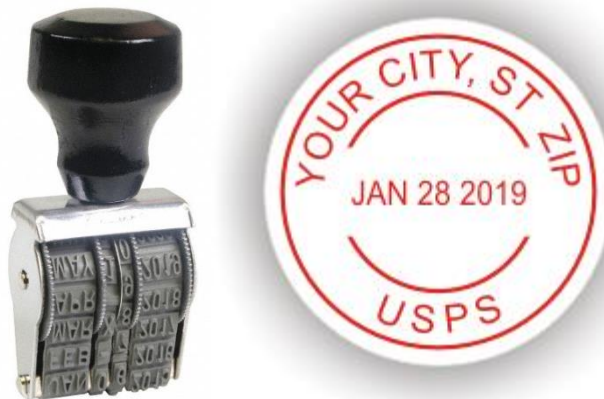
Ballot Mail volume has increased in recent years, and we can expect to process a high volume of ballot mail in the 2022 Election season. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed, so it is essential that every returning ballot gets a postmark with the correct date – meaning the date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot. Stamped and metered letters and flats, BRM, Express/Priority/SPRs, and all manual mail should all be postmarked where they contain a return ballot. This is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted.

Each plant should keep a supply of manual date stamps to postmark any uncanceled volumes during origin processing. The stamp should be updated to the current date each day at the designated rollover time (06:59), and not before. Uncanceled volumes may come from, but are not limited to:

- AFCS fine cull
- AFCS flat extractor
- AFSM rejects
- Oversized flats
- Manual case
- Package sorters




DO NOT apply a second postmark if a ballot already has a postmark.

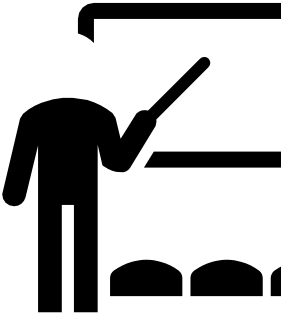
Every effort should be made to postmark any uncanceled ballots in the outgoing operation, including by hand-cancellation. If any unpostmarked ballots are found in the destinating operation after such ballots have gone through the outgoing operation, a postmark should not be applied to those ballots. This is because the postmark is the Postal Service's official statement of the date on which it accepted custody of a mailpiece, and a destinating operation cannot reliably make that determination after the mailpiece has gone through the outgoing operation.




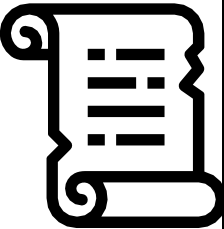

STANDARD WORK INSTRUCTIONS

Standard Work Instruction: Handling Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) for Election Mail and Political Mail

	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
	<p>1. Identify the volume as Election Mail or Political Mail or election mail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process — including ballots, voter registration cards, absentee voting applications and polling place notifications. Election Mail may be identified using the Official Election Mail Logo (pictured), using the Election Mail Checkbox, or using Tag 191 (ballots only). This is identified by the official election mail logo to the right. Political Mail is any material mailed for campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee or committee of a political party, as well as any material mailed by a political action committee or organization engaging in issues advocacy or voter mobilization. This is may be identified by the red Tag 57 shown to the right. 	
Election Mail UBBM			
	<p>2. Election Mail All Election Mail UBBM needs to be collected and given to waste mail supervisor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat tubs are a good way to collect this volume. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of the importance of this volume, it is advised to collect all Election Mail UBBMUAA in a central location.
	<p>3. Election Mail The waste mail Supervisor will contact District Customer Relations who will, in turn, contact the District Strike Team. The District Strike Team will then reach out to the appropriate Board of Elections and determine a course of action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact local site management for contact information. Do not send Election Mail UBBM to the plant for recycling following normal UBBM procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Mail volume should be handled consistently and accurately.

	<p>4. Election Mail</p> <p>Once the election official has been contacted and a course of action (i.e., return to officials or disposal) is determined by the District Strike Team, they will communicate to District Customer Relations who will instruct the supervisor on the course of Action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not dispose of the pieces until the District Customer Relations Manager has confirmed with the relevant Board of Election. Supervisors should set a cadence with their employees to handle Election Mail UBBM consistently from day-to-day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra precautions must be taken to ensure Election Mail is handled in accordance with the needs and expectations of the relevant Board of Election. By centralizing the decision-making process, we can ensure that all election stakeholders are given equal treatment
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Political Mail UBBM

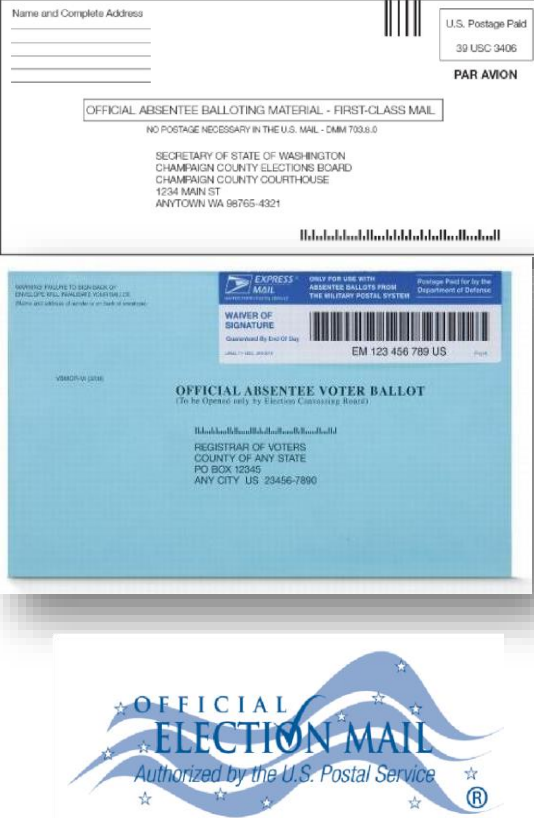

	<p>2. Political Mail</p> <p>Retail and Delivery will validate the piece is undeliverable and contains no ancillary service endorsements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancillary service endorsements are used by mailers to give direction on whether they want electronic or manual notification of the customer's updated information as well as the reason the piece is undeliverable. They also provide the Postal Service with instructions on how to handle undeliverable mailpieces. The endorsements consist of one of the following keywords: "address," "forwarding," "return," or "change," followed by the two words "service requested." 	
	<p>3. Political Mail</p> <p>Retail and Delivery will log all UBBM Political Mail according to "Maintaining Political/Election Mail Log" SWI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Mail Standard Work Instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping a log of Political Mail will protect the Postal Service and provide a record of UAA volume.
	<p>4. Political Mail</p> <p>After it is logged, Political Mail UBBM is handled in the same manner as all other UBBM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this point, political mail volume can be mixed with standard UBBM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once logged, standard processes for UBBM should be followed.

Standard Work Instruction: Election Mail – Military and Overseas Absentee Ballots

Identify and Accept Military and Overseas Absentee Ballots

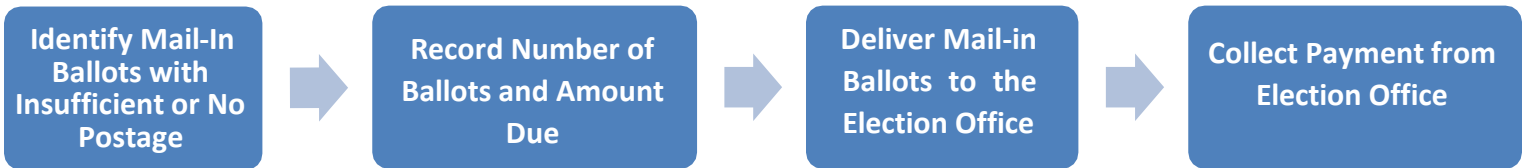





Deliver

	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify Military and Overseas Absentee Ballots. The following marks, as shown on the left, may be present and used to identify ballots. 2) Acceptance clerks and retail associates must accept this mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not require postage and are not short paid ▪ Ballots may be mailed without prepayment of postage from Post Offices, collections boxes, overseas U.S. Military and Diplomatic Post Offices, American Embassies, and American Consulates ▪ Ballots do not have to be submitted to a BMEU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This follows DMM 703.8.0
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) Deliver Absentee ballots or send to downstream facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not require postage and are not short paid ▪ Never hold ballots for postage payment or return a ballot to the voter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UOCAVA ballots do not require postage pursuant to 39 USC 3406.

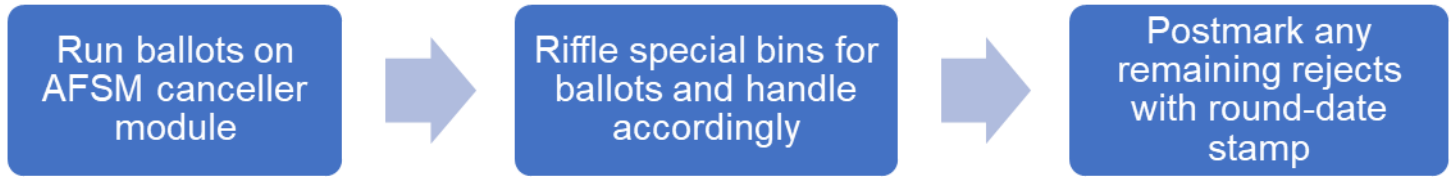
Standard Work Instruction: Election Mail


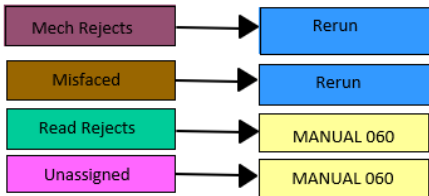

Handling Mail-In Ballots with Insufficient or No Postage



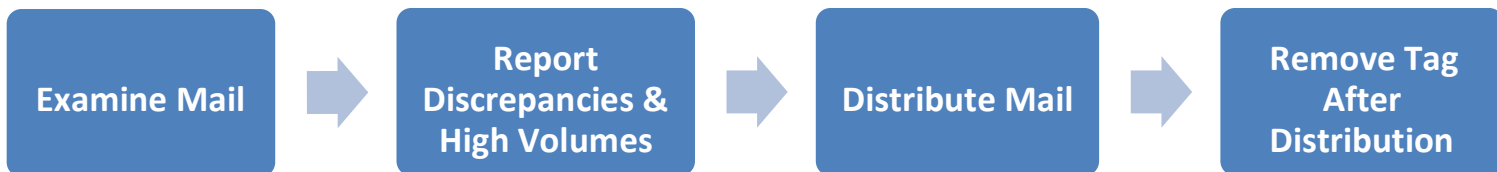
	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
INSUFFICIENT FUNDS	1) Identify mail-in ballots with insufficient or no postage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Account for ballots with insufficient or no postage using procedures for postage due. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine the number of ballots with insufficient postage.
	2) Record the number of ballots and the amount due.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A record is needed so that appropriate amount is charged to the election office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure USPS has a record of how many ballots had insufficient postage and the amount short.
	3) Deliver mail-in ballots to the election office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All mail-in ballots addressed to an election office, with or without sufficient postage, must be delivered. Never detain or hold ballots for postage payment or return a ballot to the voter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This follows the handling of short paid mail pieces as directed in Postal Operations Manual Section 171.3.
	4) Collect payment from election office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to collect payment for postage due at the time of delivery. Deliver ballots even if the office refuses to pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willful delay of mail-in ballots is a violation of policy, ethics, and law.





Standard Work Instruction: AFSM Ballot Handling



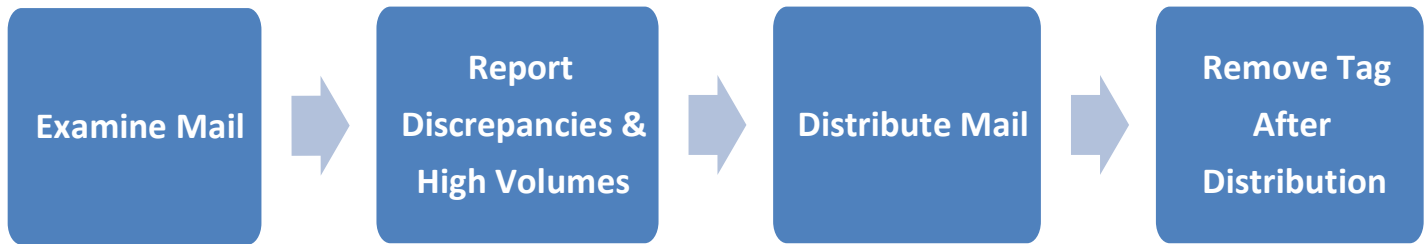
	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify flat-shaped ballot mail from collections and run on AFSM canceller module with canceller on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not run ballots on any console without canceller capability • Ensure canceller is turned on • Validate that postmark has the correct date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All returning ballots must receive a legible, correct postmark
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Riffle special bins for ballot mail and handle according to special bin instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical rejects: return to console for reinduction • Misfaced: reface and return to console for reinduction • Read rejects: flow to manual • Unassigned: flow to manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize volume flowing to manual by reinducting mechanical rejects and misfaced pieces • Ensure canceller is turned on for any rejects being reinducted
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. After following the steps above, isolate any remaining ballot rejects and immediately postmark with round-date stamp before flowing to manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure round-date stamp is set to correct date • Do not place a second postmark on a piece if it already has a postmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All uncanceled ballots must be postmarked during origin processing





Standard Work Instruction: Election Mail – F4 Distribution Clerk Responsibilities



	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
	1) Identify trays and sacks of Election Mail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for the Official Election Mail logo for all Election Mail, or a green Tag 191 for ballots. Examine trays and sacks immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is crucial for the clerks to understand which sacks and trays contain Election Mail so they can be properly handled.
	2) Upon examining the trays & sacks, report any issues to immediate supervisor. Report high volumes of Election mail to immediate supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon examination, clerks will need to identify any issues with the sacks and/or trays. Identify high volumes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor and station management need to be aware of issues with any sacks/trays identified as Election Mail so proper steps can be taken. High volumes may require changes in operations planning.
	3) Distribute all Election mail to carrier cases and place on carrier's ledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Mail to be distributed the same day it is received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Postal Service will continue to process and deliver expeditiously, as we have done in past elections.
	4) If you receive a tray or sack from processing with Tag 191, remove green Tag 191 for Ballot Mail once all mail has been distributed and keep tags for reuse. Not all trays and sacks of ballot mail will include the Tag.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only remove the green Tag 191 once all mail in sack or tray has been distributed. Retain tags for reuse to avoid need for USPS to reorder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing green Tag 191 only after all mail has been distributed ensures no Ballot Mail is left unidentified.

Standard Work Instruction: Political Mail – F4 Distribution Clerk Responsibilities




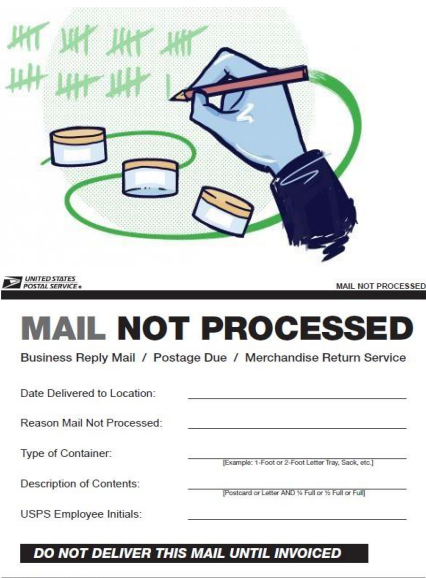
	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
	1) Identify trays and sacks of Political Mail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for a red Tag 57 for Political Mail and examine trays and sacks immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is crucial for the clerks to understand which sacks and trays contain Political Mail so they can be properly handled.
	2) Upon identifying the trays & sacks, report any discrepancies to immediate supervisor. Report high volumes of Political mail to immediate supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerks will need to identify any discrepancies with the sacks and/or Trays. Identify high volumes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor and station management need to be aware of abnormalities with any sacks/trays identified as Political Mail so proper steps can be taken. High volumes may require changes in operations planning.
	3) Distribute all Political mail to carrier cases <u>after</u> examination and notifying supervisor of discrepancies and/or high volumes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination must be completed prior to distributing volume to carriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrepancies & potential issues can only be identified prior to distribution to carriers
	4) Remove red Tag 57 for Political Mail once all mail has been distributed and keep tags for reuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only remove the red Tag 57 once all mail in sack or tray has been distributed. Retain tags for reuse to avoid need for USPS to reorder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing red Tag 57 only after all mail has been distributed ensures no Political mail is left unidentified.

Standard Work Instruction: Election Mail – Business Reply Mail – Election Day Processing

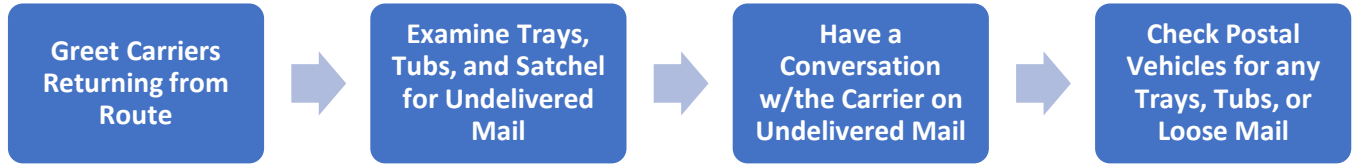
Final Inspection /
"Last Sweep"



Count and Document
Using PS Form 4830 B

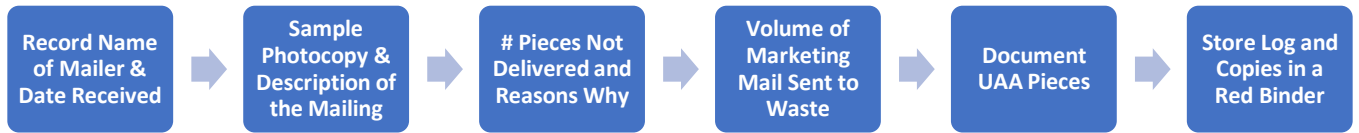
	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
	1) Inspect post offices and plants one final time for Ballots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform last sweep to collect any later-arrival ballots Sweep time will vary depending on the states in hand deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows the election officials to collect any later-arrival Business Reply Mail Ballots
	2) Clerks will count and document the mail volume using the PS Form 4830-B 3) Make two copies of the PS Form 4830B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BRM permit number and number of pieces they are taking Reason Mail Not Processed – Election Day final sweep Have the election official sign and date the form Give one copy to the BRM manager Give one copy to the BRM supervisor or manager, or the acceptance clerk who will post the mail volume to the permit account the next business day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This allows all BRM to be made available to election officials – even if the BRM mail has not been invoiced.

Standard Work Instruction: PM Backdoor Audit & Vehicle Check Election Mail and Political Mail



Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
1) Supervisor or Postmaster greet carriers as they return from the street on platform or back door and thank them for their hard work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a presence when/where the carriers return to the office from the street ▪ Thank the carriers for their continued hard work and dedication to their customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervisors and/or Postmasters should be welcoming their employees back to the office ▪ Increased presence on the floor will increase engagement from both management and craft
2) Examine all trays and tubs and carrier satchel to identify any undelivered mail from route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As carrier unloads their vehicle on the platform or in the parking lot, identify any undelivered mail ▪ Examine tubs, trays and satchel prior to carrier bringing inside to workroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is easier to track any undelivered mail on the platform during unloading prior to the carrier bringing the mail inside the building and on the workroom floor
3) Have a quick conversation with the carrier regarding any undelivered mail to understand the reasons why the mail was unable to be delivered. Record undelivered Election/Political mail in mail log.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Start a conversation with the carrier regarding any undelivered mail ▪ If Election/Political mail, record the volume and reasons for no delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Supervisor or Postmaster must be aware why the mail was not delivered so proper next steps can be taken and accurate recording can be made for Election/Political mail
4) Check all Postal vehicles at the end of the night to ensure no trays, tubs or loose mail exist in the vehicle. If found, bring inside, examine undelivered mail and have conversation with the carrier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Walk the parking lot after carriers have returned from their routes to examine all Postal vehicles to ensure no trays, tubs or loose mail is left in the vehicle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to provide an "All Clear" in the PM, management must be certain no mail is left in the vehicles ▪ Carriers are held accountable if mail is found in their vehicle

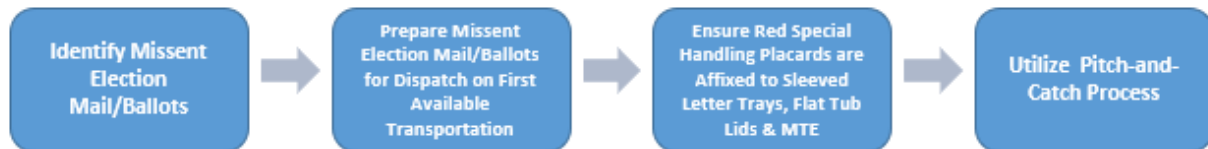
Standard Work Instruction: Maintaining the Political and Election Mail Log






Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
1) Upon arrival of Political/Election mail, record the name of mailers and the date & time the mailing was received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately enter the name of the mailer and date & time received to ensure accuracy Entries are still required for days when the unit does not receive any political/election mail. Input date and mark "No Political Mail" for those entries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is critical to document all political/election mail received to ensure proper tracking and handling of the mail
2) Photocopy one piece of the mailing to keep for records and enter a description of the mailing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select one mail piece to photocopy to capture a visual of the mailing Write a brief description in case the image is difficult to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capturing an image and writing a brief description allows for quick identification of a mailing if needed once the mailing has gone out for delivery
3) If applicable, record the number of pieces not delivered before the state's ballot return deadline and the reasons why the pieces were not delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undelivered political/election mail will need to be identified, counted, and recorded once the deadline and the requested delivery date has passed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the USPS's responsibility to record all undelivered Political/Election mail volume & provide reasoning why
4) If applicable, record the volume of any USPS Marketing Mail consigned to waste upon instruction by the mailer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to consigning to waste, count the approximate number of mail pieces and ensure instruction is given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The USPS must record any mail pieces received and not delivered
5) Document any Political/Election Undeliverable As Addressed pieces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify pieces not delivered due to incorrect address and record in log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any pieces not delivered need to be identified and recorded including UAA
6) Maintain log daily and store log in a red binder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep log and all photocopies in a designated red binder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The red binder differentiates it from other binders and easy to recognize.

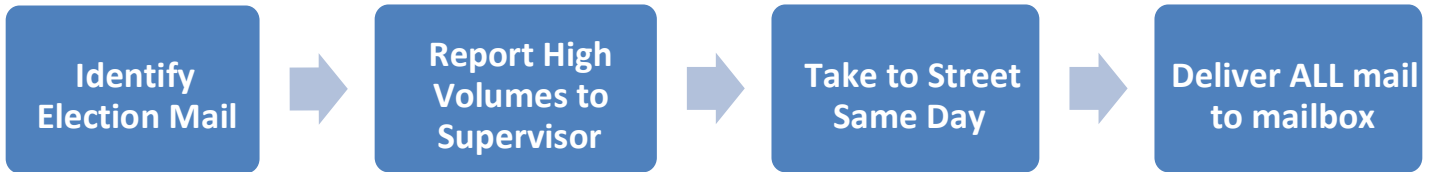
Standard Work Instruction: Handling Missent Election Mail/Ballots






Standard Work Instructions:	Handling Missent Election Mail / Ballots	Delivery: Election Mail / Ballots
Purpose:	Identify and redirect missent election mail/ ballots on first available transportation back to plant	
Updated on:	6/6/2022	Version 2



	Important Steps	Key Points
	Identification and redirection of missent Election Mail/Ballots	<p>Delivery Units will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify missent Election Mail/ballots Place missent election mail/ballots into dedicated letter trays or flat tubs Cover mail using sleeves for letter trays and lids for flat tubs Affix red Special Handling placards on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeved trays Flat tub lids Mail transportation equipment (MTE)
 	Complete the Pitch and Catch Process	<p>Delivery Units must contact Plant via phone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify Manager, Distribution Operations/Plant Manager of dispatched mail. Verbally Communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truck number Time truck left Driver's name <p>Delivery Units send an email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include: Plant Manager/Supervisor, POOM, Postmaster, District Customer Relations Manager, Distribution Operations. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time the call was placed Who they spoke with Type of container the mail is in (for example, a flat tub in an APC) <p>Plant replies "to all" via email to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the truck arrived Who handled the mail (Supervisor/MDO name) Time mail was processed

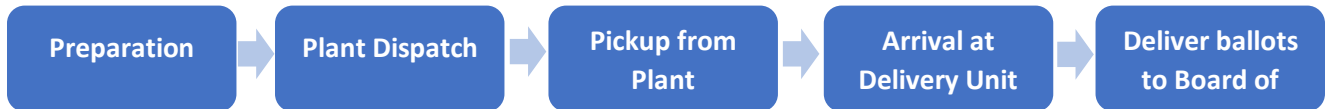
Standard Work Instruction: Election Mail Carrier Responsibilities





	Important Steps	Key Points	Reasons for Key Points
	1) Identify and be aware of all Election Mail brought to case by F4 clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with clerks to understand which mail is Election Mail Keep Election Mail in sight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carriers need to understand which mail is Election Mail so it can be properly handled Keeping mail in sight will ensure it goes to the street same day
	2) Report abnormally high volumes of Election Mail to immediate supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon identifying abnormally high volumes of Election Mail, notify supervisor of the high volumes so proper steps can be taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management needs to be aware of high volumes to be able to change operating plans to ensure all Election Mail gets delivered in a timely manner
	3) Ensure all Election Mail is taken to the street the <u>same day</u> received at the carrier case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrier needs to identify all Election Mail at their case after pull down to ensure all mail is taken to the street same day as received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Mail cannot be delayed or curtailed and therefore should always go to the street same day as received
	4) Deliver all Election Mail to a secure mailbox (place inside mailbox) – <u>DO NOT</u> leave Election Mail on ledges, doorsteps, next to mailboxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Election Mail needs to be placed <u>inside</u> of a mailbox, period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Mail should never be left accessible to the public and therefore should always be placed inside of the mailbox for the intended recipient

Standard Work Instruction: Pitch-Catch-Clear Process for Election Ballots

Standard Work Instructions:	Pitch-Catch-Clear Process for Election Ballots on Deadline Day	Tracking: Election and Political Mail
Purpose:	Establish a standardized Pitch-Catch-Clear Process to deliver ballots from Processing Plants to Board of Elections (BOE) on deadline day	
Updated on:	09/23/2022	Version 3.0



	Important Steps	Key Points
	Preparation	<p>Plant Mangers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stakeholders and local post office POC information (email & phone number) which include but are not limited to the following managers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant, In-Plant Support, Managers of Operations Integration, Distribution Operations, Transportation and Network Systems, Delivery and Retail, as well as Postmaster, Dock Supervisor, and Managers of Customer Relations Communicate the contact list to all parties Notify all parties of the Pitch-Catch-Clear Process
	Plant Dispatch	<p>For ballots that are dispatched to delivery units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TANS manager consolidates the list of delivery units, dispatch times, and total number of ballots TANS manager sends "Pitch" email (cc: all stakeholders) and follows up with a phone call to delivery units receiving ballots TANS manager performs All-Clear TANS manager communicates with all stations within area of responsibility
	Pickup from Plant	<p>For ballots that are picked up by Board of Elections (BOE) designee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage ballots in a designated location After ballots are collected, MDO or Dock Supervisor sends email confirmation to stakeholders MDO performs All-Clear
	Arrival at Delivery Unit	<p>Postmaster verifies the number of ballots annotated in "Pitch" email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If correct, send "Catch" email to stakeholders confirming receipt of ballots If incorrect or ballots have not arrived as scheduled, send email within 60 minutes to TANS manager and also make a phone call for investigation and request a follow up (cc: stakeholders) Once mail is distributed, verify workroom floor is clear of all mail Ensure ballots are delivered timely
	Deliver ballots to Board of Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon return to office, report to management on duty confirming that all ballots were delivered to the BOE Management performs All-Clear certification Management sends "Clear" email to stakeholders

Standard Work Instruction

All Clear Certification for Delivery Units for Political Mail and Election Mail

Election years are always very busy for the Postal Service as we deliver both Election Mail and Political Mail for local, state, and federal elections happening across the United States of America.

During the period preceding local, state, and national primaries, special elections, general elections, and runoffs elections the Postal Service accepts and delivers many political campaign mailings, frequently in large quantities. These mailings are made up of individual candidates and their campaign organizations, as well as by local, state, and national committees of political parties. There are also large numbers of ballots, and other Election Mail, mailed out to voters and the Postal Service is responsible for properly handling these materials.

To ensure that we are delivering these mailings to the American Voters in an efficient and timely manner, the Postal Service will be requiring all delivery units to certify, on a daily basis, that their unit is clear of all Political Mail and Election Mail committed for delivery that day. This means the carrier cases, clerk distribution cases, staging areas, the dock, the window area, supervisor desk, PAR & RFS area, BRM & BMEU area, P.O. box section, collection boxes & lobby drops, and all delivery vehicles need to be checked.

This reporting will continue until two weeks after the General Election.

The Political / Election Mail All Clear Certification link for Delivery Units is available on the Political / Election Mail Blue Share page at this link:

<https://networkops.blueshare5.usps.gov/sites/pco/Elections/SitePages/Home.aspx>

View Facility Certificates
Search for a facility by finance number or location and view the current certificate list.

Start Date: 2022-05-05

End Date: 2022-05-05

Step #1 - Select Facility Type:

☒ Delivery/Retail

☐ Processing Operations

☐ Other Facility Types

☐ COVID-19 Associated Certs

Step #2 - Search by Finance No., FDB, or ZIP Code:

Go

Step #3 - Drill Down to Facility:

Area: Select a Area ...

District:

MPOO:

Facility:

Select “Delivery/Retail”, and drill to your Area, District, MPOO and Facility/Unit. If your unit has not yet certified for the day, you will see this window. Click on the red “Respond”. All questions must be answered for your unit to be in compliance for certification. At this time,

View Facility Certificates
Search for a facility by finance number or location and view the current certificate list.

Start Date: 2022-05-05

End Date: 2022-05-05

Step #1 - Select Facility Type:

☒ Delivery/Retail

☐ Processing Operations

☐ Other Facility Types

☐ COVID-19 Associated Certs

Step #2 - Search by Finance No., FDB, or ZIP Code:

1983630542 **Go**

Step #3 - Drill Down to Facility:

Area: CENTRAL

District: KS-MO

MPOO: MPOO D

Facility: Overland Park/Finance

Certificates: AM: Political/Election Mail 'All Clear' Checklist Certification

Status	Area	District	MPOO	Facility Name	Date	Frequency	Certificate Name	Completed By/On
1 Respond	CENTRAL	KS-MO	MPOO D	Overland Park/Finance	2022-05-05	DAILY	AM: Political/Election Mail 'All Clear' Checklist Certification	N/A

it is recommended not to click the “N/A” button. Only answer Yes or No. Click the Submit

button or your certification will not be saved.

<p>IF "No" was selected above, please provide an explanation here:</p> <div></div> <p>Does the Delivery Unit have the 2020 Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Short Paid Ballots memos posted near the area where the BRM is worked? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Are the postage due/short paid election mail procedures being followed? Absentee ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment. DO NOT delay delivery of balloting materials. Willful delay of absentee balloting material or other election material is a violation of policies, ethics and law. *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Is the Delivery Unit free of delayed and curtailed Political/Election Mail? (i.e. distribution case, RFS location, PO box section and supervisor's desk) *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>If there was delayed/curtailed Political/Election Mail, was it properly reported in Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV), identified on your HQ-approved political log, and your election coordinator notified? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Is the Political/Election Mail "All Clear" certification being completed daily? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p>	<p>CARRIER CASES:</p> <p>Are carrier cases clear of Political/Election Mail? Are carriers aware of the policy to hold unknown recipient mail for ten days before returning to sender? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Are carrier cases clear of mail pieces overlooked after strapping out? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Has management verified that non-forwardable Political/Election Mail is not co-mingled with Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail? Non-forwardable include: unendorsed: non-profit, standard, and marketing mail. Address Service Requested (ASR), Change Service Requested (CSR), Electronic Service Requested (ESR), Forwarding Service Requested (FSR), Return Service Requested (RSR), Temp-Return Service Requested (TRSR). *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Is Undeliverable As Addressed and Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (reference DMM 507.1.1) being properly recorded on the HQ-approved Destination Delivery Unit log? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p>
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<p>NOTE: All questions must be answered in order for this certificate to be marked as compliant.</p> <div></div> <p>NOTE: The following section defines all AM questions to be answered BEFORE 2pm local time.</p> <p>CERTIFICATION:</p> <p>Is your facility using the official logs from POMO-07-2020 as required, not your own local customized log? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>I certify that this facility has been validated and is clear of ALL committed POLITICAL Mail. *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>I certify that this facility has been validated and is clear of ALL committed ELECTION Mail (including ballots). *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>If "No" was selected for any question above, please provide an explanation here:</p> <div></div>	<p>BACK OFFICE:</p> <p>Does the Delivery Unit maintain a HQ-approved Political/Election Mail log and is it current with sample photocopies? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>What is the recorded date of the last entry in the log?</p> <div></div> <p>Is the Delivery Unit familiar with the required service talks? Are they posted on the workroom floor and being shared with employees? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Does the Delivery Unit know how to handle military, overseas, and absentee ballots? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Does the Delivery Unit have a contingency plan to deliver late arriving or missent Political/Election Mail? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p> <p>Is the Delivery Unit clear of Business Reply Mail (BRM) today? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A</p>
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ADDITIONAL PROCESS CHECKS:

Is Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (carrier cases and P.O. Box section) being worked/processed daily? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ N/A

Is Undeliverable As Addressed -- letters (PARS) and flats (FPARS) trayed and parcels processed in RFS and dispatched to the plant? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ N/A

If the Delivery Unit has an on-site Bulk Mail Entry Unit, is an HQ-approved Political/Election Mail log present and current with sample photocopies? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ N/A

Are RED tag 57 and/or GREEN tag 191 being used in the Delivery Unit to identify Political Campaign Mail/Official Election Mail? Tag 57 is the RED tag used to identify containers with Political Mail in it. Tag 191 is the GREEN tag used to identify Ballot Mail; this tag is only used on trays or sacks. *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ N/A

Daily certification of this "All Clear" checklist is scheduled to end Wednesday, November 30, 2022.

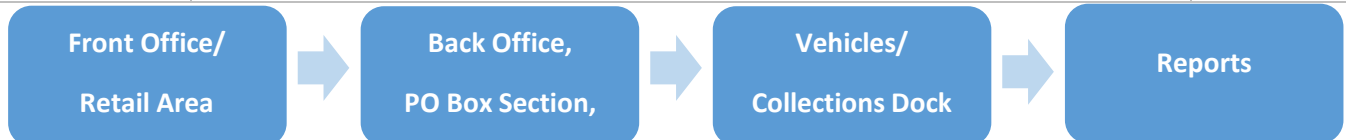
Completed By: N/A
Completed On: N/A





The U.S. Mail remains a secure, efficient and effective means for citizens and campaigns to participate in the electoral process, and the Postal Service is proud of our role as an important component of the nation's democratic process. Thank you for all you do to ensure the safe and timely delivery of the nation's Election Mail.

Standard Work Instruction

Clearing Election / Political Mail – Delivery & Retail Units

Standard Work Instructions:	Standard Work Instruction For Daily Clearing of Incoming Political/Election Mail	Tracking: Election and Political Mail
Purpose:	To ensure Political/Election Mail received is delivered daily	
Updated on:	09/26/2022	Version 2.0



	Important Steps
	Verify front office/retail areas are clear, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Point Of Sale (mPOS) cart • Dutch door • Postage Due area • BMEU/BRM area • Lobby mail slots • Self-Service Kiosk • Retail window area – under the counter/drawers • Collection boxes (Front of PO)
	Verify back office/Post Office box section/workroom floor area are clear, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor desks • Post Office box staging area • PRS/Firm/Caller Service area • Hot case/3M case/Throwback case • Accountable cage area • Hold Mail area • Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM)/Nixie Mail/Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS) • Carrier cases/carrier satchels • Empty equipment (trays, tubs, hampers, etc.)
	Verify the following are all clear: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrier vehicles (including rural POV) • Loading dock • Collection dock • Vestibules
	Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political/Election Mail log with copies or samples of mailings • DCV (Delivery Condition Visualization) • CPMS reports • AM/PM certification • All Clear certification

Standard Work Instruction: Election Day Hand to Hand Exchange Local Managers

Standard Work Instructions:	Election Day Process for Local Managers	Delivery: Election and Political Mail
Purpose:	Coordinate hand-to-hand exchange to ensure ballots are delivered timely to the Board of Elections (BOE) whenever possible	
Updated on:	09/27/2022	Version 4.0


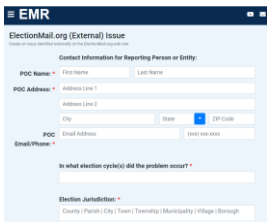
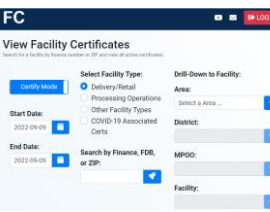
Maintain list of
Board of Election
(BOE) Locations



Designate Points of
Contact (POC)



Coordinate Hand-
to-Hand Exchange

	Important Steps	Key Points
 	<p>Hand-to-hand exchange within designated delivery area</p>	<p>Managers of Customer Relations (MCR) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and maintain a list of BOEs in the delivery area Maintain log with BOE contact information Conduct touchpoints with local BOEs and Postmasters/Management Designee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postmaster/Management Designee will be POC for local BOE Ensure facilities with multiple BOEs separate accordingly Report and address concerns via internal ticket management system: https://electionmail.usps.gov/ <p>Postmaster/Management Designee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with the Manager of Customer Relations to determine the HUB locations within Postal BOE jurisdiction Determine cutoff times for timely delivery to BOE Communicate with all delivery units within area of responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate Vote by Mail volumes Expect volumes of absentee ballots Prepare for BOE to mail last-minute ballots Communicate BOE concerns to the Manager of Customer Relations (MCR) and document any issue on the internal ticket management system: https://electionmail.usps.gov/
	<p>Hand-to-hand exchange within local Post Office</p>	<p>Local Postmaster or Management Designee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a list of local BOE contacts with drop off locations and times Record and report volumes received or returned from/to each BOE Knowledge of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery requirement of ballots on Election Day Latest drop off time for ballots to be counted Postmarking policy, refer to postmarking Memorandum dated October 2022. Arrange hand-to-hand delivery of late arriving ballots Complete daily All Clear certification: https://facilitycerts.usps.gov/FacCert_HOME.cfm

PROCESSING OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT ORDER

PROCESSING OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Processing Operations Management Order

UNITED STATES
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SUBJECT: 2022 Political and Election Mail Policies and Procedures

DATE: October 24, 2022

NO: POMO-007-22 **Policy Tracking Number:** PO-007-10212022

TO: Regional VPs, Processing
Operations Division Directors,
Processing Operations Plant
Managers, MIPS

This Processing Operations Management Order (POMO) provides the updated policies and procedures to be used for the 2022 Election and Political Mail season.

The content of this POMO is intended to provide guidance to the field on the specific processing parameters associated with Election Mail and Political Mail. This POMO also provides instruction relative to processing, distribution, and delivery accountability and tools to monitor processing efficiency. In addition to some technical updates, this document includes the following material changes to the version of the POMO published on April 21, 2022:

- Clarification of the 2022 blackout date for Franked Mail.
- Description of the Postal Service's role in the election process
- Revised process for handling UBBM for Election Mail and Political Mail.
- Additional Stand-Up Talk regarding 2022 Guidance on Postmarking Ballots.
- Updated logs to facilitate logging of Election Mail and Political Mail.
- Election Mail and Political Mail Audit Checklist.
- Clarification of the purpose of the Operational Clean Sweep Checklist to assist in conducting operational ALL CLEAR certification process.
- Clarification of the role of the Election and Government Mail Services team
- Clarification that District Managers of Customer Relations now serve as the lead liaison local election officials and Boards of Election.
- Updated MCV line items
- Additional Stand-up talks

All Plant Managers must certify (certification link below) that they understand the requirements of this POMO and acknowledge that this document has been shared with all employees in their facility and all parts of this POMO are fully executed

[Certification Link POMO Political and Election Mail Policies and Procedures Updated](#)

/S Kristina R. Reynoso
Senior Director
Processing Operations Implementation

/S Jason R. DeChambeau
Senior Director
Strategic Planning and Implementation

PROCESSING OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Processing Operations Management Order

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USPS will play a very critical role in the 2022 national elections in November 2022. The purpose of this Processing Operations Management Order (POMO) is to define and establish a nationally standardized procedure to receive, process, and deliver Election Mail, Political Campaign Mail, and Political Message Mail.

Identification of Political and Ballot Mail via the Tag 57 (Political Campaign and Message Mail) and Tag 191 (Domestic and International Ballots), respectively, are important components of our process. Both will require thorough and precise documentation of arrival and processing into our political mail logs.

General

The American electorate votes on numerous political offices and issues. Eligible citizens cast ballots every four years for president, every two years for one-third of the U.S. senators and all members of the House of Representatives, and at varying frequencies for governorships and other state, county, and local offices, and referenda measures. During the period preceding local, state, and national primaries, special elections, and general elections, the Postal Service accepts and delivers large volumes of ballots and other election related materials, as well as many political campaign and message mailings.

Purpose

The purpose of this Processing Operations Management Order (POMO) is to define and establish a nationally standardized procedure to receive, process, and deliver Election Mail and Political Campaign and Message Mail.

Tag 57 - Political Mail

This tag is used for any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail postage rates for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, a campaign committee, or a committee of a political party. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate's campaign committee or political party committee as the return address. Political Message Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices by a PAC, super-PAC, or other organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization. Both types of Political Mail may use Tag 57.

Tag 191 - Domestic and International Ballots

This tag is used only for Ballot Mail. As a larger grouping, Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized elections officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. Election Mail includes ballots, sample ballots, polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other election-related materials. Military balloting materials for federal elections may be sent without prepayment of postage to and from: members of the Uniformed Services on active duty

(Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration); members of the U.S. Merchant Marine; eligible spouses and dependents of members of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine; and U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

The number of "vote by mail" states and mail-in voting volumes have increased. Ballot processing, both outgoing and incoming, will be very important and critical to a successful election season. ALL return ballots must be cancelled on our AFCS's and AFSM100's or hand cancelled. The cancellation mark with date on the ballots provides the official date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot.

IV Internal Mail Tracking will be used to track Political and Election mail flow and service performance. Each Division should have an IV-Internal Mail Tracking SME who can monitor daily Political and Election mail performance, as well as diagnose specific mail processing issues and implement countermeasures to fix mail flow problems. Based on industry feedback, the Postal Service has updated the Service Type Identifier (STID) table for Political Mail and Ballot Mail in 2022. The Postal Service provides customized STIDs specifically for Political Mail and ballots to allow for Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) to identify mailpieces, with all expected service combinations, during mail processing. As part of a serialized 1Mb, STIDs offer mailers near-real-time tracking visibility on both outbound and return mailpieces. STIDs also provide the Postal Service with enhanced tracking capabilities that allow us to quickly identify and process Political Mail and on-hand ballots throughout the mail network.

MCV Option lines will be activated to monitor Political and Election mail conditions daily in our facilities. These conditions will be reported out through a daily push. Sites with reported high inventories and delays will be required to send in their action plans.

The Postal Service recently established the Election and Government Mail Services team. This team is responsible for leading the nationwide effort to facilitate the efficient processing and delivery of Election Mail during the 2022 election cycle and beyond. A HQ Election Mail Strike Team and District Strike Team will be assembled restructuring the roles and responsibilities that have been previously followed. This new team will allow for clear paths of communication and accountability from delivery units, plants, districts, and divisions to the HQ levels for a successful Election Mail season.

Compliance with our Political and Election Mail processes and procedures will be ensured through a combination of daily audits and clearance checklists. This will help ensure a successful 2022 Election season.

Identifying Official Election Mail

Official Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized elections officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. Official Election Mail includes:

- Mail-In Ballots
- Ballot Materials
- Voter Registration Cards
- Absentee Applications
- Polling Place Notifications
- Military Ballots

Ballot Design

Some of the considerations given to Election Mail by the mailer are whether they would like the ballots to be returned as a letter or flat. The USPS recommends an automation-compatible 1–2-ounce letter.

Each state sets its own requirements for the method and timing of returning ballots. Some use a "ballot in hand" deadline where ballots must be received by election officials by a certain time on Election Day to be counted. Others use a "ballot by postmark date" system where ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received within an allowable time period after that date in order to be counted. The quality of cancellation on the ballots is very important, especially in "ballot by postmark" states. Election officials have indicated illegible or missing postmarks can be an issue.

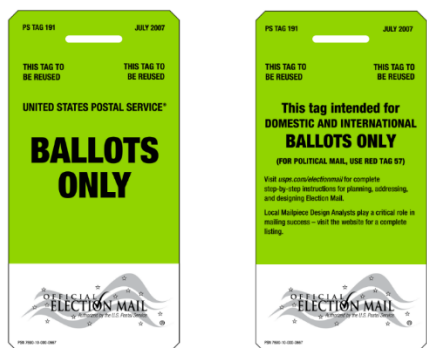
Election commissions and jurisdictions may rely on the postmark as their official date the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot, so it is essential that we ensure every mailpiece gets a postmark with a date. This includes metered letters, all flats, and all manual mail to be hand-cancelled. Working with election officials to develop best-practice mailpiece design and preparation guidance will improve ballot envelope hygiene and processing success.

Election officials are required to indicate in a prominent location the proper amount of First-Class Mail postage that must be applied to balloting materials for any election, whether sent in hard copy or electronic formats. An exception may apply in certain circumstances for balloting materials for military and overseas voters or where postage is prepaid.

In response to requests from election officials and municipal mailers, the Postal Service began applying a cancellation mark to all letter pieces processed on USPS Letter Automation Compatible Postage Cancellation Systems in March 2014. In addition, for flat-shape ballots, the flat machines were modified to provide cancellation marks as well. This change has had a variety of uses for voter communications with election officials by including the date on which ballot materials, voter registration cards, and absentee applications were accepted by the Postal Service.

Use of Tag 191

The use of the green Tag 191 provides immediate visibility to ballot mail it enters into our processing facilities. Tag 191 is used for Domestic and International Ballots only and is available at local Post Office or Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU). The green Tag 191 may be used only to identify ballots addressed for domestic or international delivery. The tag may not be used to identify containers of other types of Official Election Mail, such as polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other election-related materials. Tag 191 may not be used by other organizations or individuals who are not election officials. Tag 191 may not be used by organizations or individuals for Political Campaign Mail that promotes political candidates, referendums, or political campaigns.



Identifying Political Campaign Mail

- Any material accepted for mailing at First Class Mail or Marketing Mail postage rates that is mailed for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, or committee of a political party is classified as a political campaign mailing. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate's campaign committee or the committee of a political party as the return address. Do not confuse political campaign mailings with official mailings by members of Congress under congressional franking privileges.
- An individual or organization recognized as such by the appropriate governmental election control authority is considered to be a registered political candidate or party.
- A qualified political committee for the purpose of eligibility for Nonprofit Marketing Mail rates is as follows:
 - The term "qualified political committee" means:
 - A national committee of a political party.
 - A state committee of a political party.
 - The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.
 - The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.
 - The National Republican Congressional Committee.
 - The National Republican Senatorial Committee.
 - The term "national committee" means the organization that, by virtue of the bylaws of a political party, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of that political party at the national level.
 - The term "state committee means" the organization that, by virtue of the bylaws of a political party, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of that political party at the state level.

Postage for political campaign mail can be paid by permit, postage indicia, postage meter, or stamps affixed to each mail piece. Mailings by a qualified political committee often bear endorsements such as "Paid for by (committee) and authorized by (candidate)".

A qualified political committee can be eligible for Nonprofit Marketing Mail rates. The name and return address of the qualifying organization must appear either on the outside of the mailpiece or in a prominent location on the material being mailed at the Nonprofit Marketing Mail rates.

Identifying Political Message Mail

Tag 57 may also be used to identify *political message mailings* from Political Action Committees (PACs), Super-PACs, or other organizations engaged in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Political Mail comes in two classes of mail, for the most part, with characteristics as follows:

First-Class Mail: DMM 230

- Any mailable matter may be sent as First-Class Mail, but materials containing

personal information, handwritten or typed materials; bills and statements; and matter marked "postcard", or "double postcard" must be sent by First-Class Mail, Priority Mail®, or Priority Mail Express®. There are exceptions for advertisements and solicitations.

- Free forwarding and return
- Sealed against inspection

Marketing Mail: DMM 240

- Mailable matter that is less than 16 ounces, is not required to be mailed as First-Class Mail, and is not authorized to be mailed as a Periodical may be mailed as Marketing Mail.
- Forwarding/return require endorsement and a fee
- May be opened for postal inspection

Use of Tag 57

Tag 57 can be used for any political campaign mailing by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, and committee of a political party, *or a political message mailing by a Political Action Committee (PAC), Super-PAC, or other organizations engaged in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.*

Mail from organizations such as labor unions, religious groups, retiree associations, and others that endorse specific candidates or political issues is not political campaign mail. However, this mail is considered "political message mail" and can be identified with Tag 57 for processing. The use of Tag 57 is optional, but the Postal Service does encourage mailers to use the tag to identify trays and sacks of political campaign mail and political message mail while it is in the mailstream.



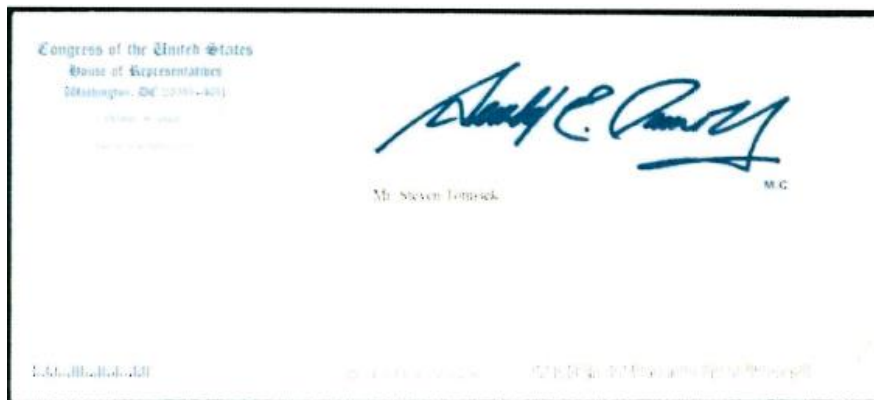
Identifying Franked Mail

Franked Mail, also referenced as Congressional Mail, is defined as official mail sent **without** postage prepayment, which can be utilized by Members and Members-elect of Congress, the Vice-President, and other authorized individuals. Franked Mail is identified by the facsimile signature of the Member of Congress in the upper right corner of the envelope or franked label, followed by "M.C." standing for Member of Congress, or "U.S.S." for U.S. Senate.

Franked mail can be sent as single-piece or mass congressional mailings. Most mass congressional mailings are sent from Washington, DC. Members of Congress may,

however, dispatch these mailings from Post Offices other than Washington, DC. Members of Congress occasionally enter mass mailings at local Post Offices outside Washington, DC. Members or their vendors must submit a PS Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*, to the entry Post Office when the first franked mass mailing is made there.

Franked Mail Envelopes - It is permissible for congressional offices to secure their franked envelope to various other envelopes or packaging when placing items in the mailstream. If such an item is identified, do not return it to the congressional office and do not detain it unless there is a question of mail security. Congressional mass mailings do **not** receive a PS Tag 57, *Political Campaign Mailing*, which is used to identify Political Campaign Mail. PS Tag 11, *Congressional Mail*, "Postmaster - Open and Distribute" is used on all sacks or trays of congressional mail. This tag helps identify the franked congressional mailing as it moves through the mailstream.



Example of a Franked Mail Envelope

Franking Blackout Period

With the exception of individual-piece mailings and those in response to a request, Members of Congress who are seeking re-election are prohibited from sending franked mass mailings during the designated "Franking Blackout" period before Election Day, whether for a primary, special, or general election.

House Mailing Services determined that September 8, 2022 is their deadline for mass mailings over 500 pieces and there is no deadline for other mail. The Senate Postmaster indicated that the Senate's mass mail cutoff date is also September 8, 2022 and their franked mail cutoff date for regular constituent mail for FY22 is September 29th. As noted above, this blackout period does **not** include individual-piece franked mailings. If you receive a mass franked mailing with PS Tag 57 in your unit, please contact your supervisor or BME Manager. If there are indications of abuse, local management may escalate the issue by making a copy of the mailing and submitting a completed Issue Report to the District Manager of Customer Relations.

Detention of Franked Mail - Employees should be aware that Franked Mail is **not** to be detained. The Postal Operations Manual (POM) provides specific guidelines concerning how to handle this mail in response to an incident where a franked mailing was improperly detained. It is important that these guidelines are adhered to in order to ensure there are no delays when dealing with Franked (Congressional) Mail. With the exception of mail security, Franked Mail must be dispatched and delivered as addressed. If there are indications of abuse of the franking privilege, this must be reported to the Pricing and Classification Service Center (PCSC), who will in turn refer the case to the Postal Inspection Service and Government Relations, Headquarters.

Postal Service's Role in the Election Process:

The U.S. Postal Service is responsible for processing, transporting, and delivering the nation's Election Mail. We are committed to fulfilling our role in the electoral process when public policy makers choose to employ the mail as a part of their election system. We are proud to provide a secure, efficient, and effective way for citizens to participate in elections when officials choose to use the mail as part of the voting process. We employ a robust and proven process to ensure proper handling of all Election Mail, including ballots.

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Handling Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) for Election Mail and Political Mail

During the 2022 Election season, Election Mail and Political Mail volume will increase. Some of these mailpieces will be undeliverable as addressed, and it is critical that they are handled correctly to protect the sanctity of the election and maintain the public's trust in the Postal Service. This policy is an update to an SWI and SUT on UBBM for Election Mail and Political Mail issued earlier this year.

Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process — including ballots, voter registration cards, absentee voting applications and polling place notifications. Election Mail can be sent by election officials to voters using First-Class Mail or Marketing Mail and can be visually identified in the mailstream by the Official Election Mail Logo, which is authorized for use only on official Election Mail.



IMAGE 1 – Official Election Mail Logo



IMAGE 2 – Tag 191,

Election Mail should not be confused with Political Mail, which is any material mailed for campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee or committee of a political party, as well as any material mailed by a political action committee or organization engaging in issues advocacy or voter mobilization. Political Mail can be sent using First-Class

IMAGE 3 – Tag 57



Mail, Marketing Mail, or Every Door Direct Mail and can be visually identified in the mailstream by Tag 57.

Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) is Marketing Mail that is undeliverable as addressed and does not contain an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are used by mailers to give direction on whether they want electronic or manual notification of the customer's updated information as well as the reason the piece is undeliverable. They also provide the Postal Service with instructions on how to handle undeliverable mailpieces. The endorsements consist of one of the following keywords: "address," "forwarding," "return," or "change," followed by the two words "service requested." UBBM includes mail which has no human-readable ancillary service endorsement as well as mail which is endorsed Electronic Service Requested (ESR) but has no mailer-applied Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb). It also includes ESR where the IMb is completely obliterated.

Normally, UBBM is sent to the local plant for recycling, but there are special handling processes in place for Election Mail UBBM.

- **For Election Mail UBBM:** Extra precautions must be taken to ensure Election Mail is handled in accordance with the needs and expectations of the relevant Board of Election. Delivery Unit Employees and CIOSS Host Site Waste Mail Verification Employees should give Election Mail UBBM to their Supervisor or Manager who must contact the District Customer Relations who, in coordination with the District Strike Team, will contact the relevant Board of Elections for guidance. The District Customer Relations Manager will determine whether the Board of Election wants the pieces back. If they do not, the Customer Relations Manager may approve the disposal of the pieces as UBBM with correlating placards.
- **For Political Mail UBBM:** Retail and Delivery employees should validate that the piece is undeliverable Marketing Mail and contains no ancillary service endorsements. Log all UBBM Political Mail according to the "*Maintaining Political/Election Mail Log*" Standard Work Instruction. Once it is confirmed and logged appropriately, Political Mail UBBM should be handled in the same manner as other UBBM and sent to the local plant for recycling.

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Mail Processing Operations Logs

Plant Located BMEU Election							Office: BMEU/DMU						
Mail/Political Mail Log							Please retain copies of each mailing and retain all logs for 6 years						
Political Mail or Election Mail (PM / EM)	Permit No.	Name of Candidate, Committee, or Mailer (try to be descriptive)	Date/ Time Rec'd at Office	No. of Pieces	Class of Mail (Std, 1C, etc.)	Processing Category	BMEU Empl. Who Ensured Mail was Tagged and Notified BME Supv.	PVDS Job (VIN)	Does Mailing Claim Automation Rates?	If mailing claims automation rates, does mailpiece meet auto-compatible standards?	Signature of Plant Supervisor Taking Responsibility for the Mail	Date/ Time of Dispatch to Workfloor	Location in Plant Where Plant Supv. Directed Mail be Brought to
1)													
2)													
3)													
4)													
5)													
6)													
7)													
8)													
9)													
10)													

Plant Election Mail/Political Mail Log

Please retain copies of each mailing and retain all log for 6 years

Office:

Political Mail <i>or</i> Election Mail (PM / EM)	Permit No.	Name of Candidate, Committee, or Mailer (try to be descriptive)	Date/ Time Rec'd at Office	No. of Pieces	Class of Mail (Std., 1C, etc.)	Processing Category	BMEU Empl. Who Ensured Mail was Tagged and Notified BME Supv.	PVDS Job (Y / N)	(----- "N/A" if it's a PVDS Mailing -----)		
									Signature of Plant Supervisor Taking Responsibility for the Mail	Date/Time of Dispatch to Workfloor	Location in Plant Where Plant Supv. Directed Mail be Brought to
1)											
2)											
3)											
4)											
5)											
6)											
7)											
8)											

Political Mail Log/Tracking Arrival/Clearance (All Clear declaration)

- All Political Mail and Election Mail must be logged through entire mailstream.
- Compare logs between functions to ensure all entered mail is processed and delivered. The Operations Supervisor, or their designee, must sign the BMEU Political/Election Mail Log when responsibility for mail is transferred.
- Clearance must be communicated with Customer Relations Managers and Teams.
- Forward completed logs to plant management and the Election and Political Mail Team.
- The Processing & Distribution Election and Political Mailing Log and other required Election and Political Mail materials are available at the Election Mail Website:
<https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/electionmail/>

Any delay in processing Election Mail or Political Mail must be documented:

- **Any delay in processing Election Mail must be documented using the form below and immediate attention needs to be given by communicating with the District Strike Team or Customer Relations Marketing Manager.**

Political Mail:

- **Late Deposit** - Inform mailers of the potential for late delivery if they attempt to deposit political campaign and message mailings too late for delivery by the election date. Document and maintain this advice.
- **Report of Delays** - Give prompt attention to any reported delay in processing or delivering political campaign and message mailings and fully document inquiries made and subsequent actions taken.
- Utilize form below to document late deposit or late arriving.

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LATE ARRIVING POLITICAL/OFFICIAL ELECTION MAILING REPORT

Mail Information

Type of Mail: (Check One)

Political Mail

Official Election Mail

Date and Time of Receipt:

Approximate Number of Pieces:

Processing Category (Letters or Flats):

Candidate or Board of Elections Name:

Person Reporting Late Mail Arrival

Phone:

Office Name and ZIP Code:

Mailpiece Details:

Permit Number: _____ Office Where Permit Held: _____

Name of Permit Holder: _____

Phone, Address Information on Mailpiece: _____

Contact Name (If known): _____

**PLEASE RETURN A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE DISTRICT Manager of
Customer Relations**

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Processing and Delivery Records

Managers, Business Mail Entry, and postmasters must keep documented records of all Election Mail and political campaign and message mailings that are deposited or received at their offices, with particular attention to those deposited or received too late for timely delivery. At a minimum, these documented records must include the following:

- The name of the mailer.
- A sample, photocopy, or description of the mailing.
- The date and time the mailing was received for dispatch or delivery.
- The Election Day deadline and, if applicable, the date of requested delivery.
- If applicable, the approximate number of pieces not delivered before the Election Day deadline and/or the date of requested delivery and the reasons why delivery was not timely.
- The approximate volume of any Marketing Mail consigned to waste upon instruction by the mailer.

In most cases, this type of documentation is necessary if inquiries are made regarding a specific mailing and if investigation of a mailing is required resulting from a service-related issue.

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Stand-Up Talk

Processing and Distribution Operations Guidance on Postmarking Ballots in Preparation for the 2022 General Election

With the 2022 General Election fast approaching, the intent of this Stand-Up Talk is to clarify a few procedures concerning the postmarking of ballots. The Postal Service's policy is to make every effort to postmark all ballots mailed by voters. In addition to the guidance below, please familiarize yourself with the 2022 Postmarking Guidance Memorandum, which was sent from the Postmaster General to all employees on October 11, 2022. It can also be found on Blue here: <https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/product-solutions/electionmail/welcome.htm>

All completed ballots returned through the mail should be postmarked/cancelled on our Advanced Facer Canceler Systems (AFCS/AFCS 200), Automated Flat Sorting Machine (AFSM100), or hand cancelled. Automated and manual postmarking operations should be spot-checked daily for correctness and legibility. If the date is not correct or readable, cancellation must stop immediately until the issue is resolved. Work with Maintenance to address any problems. If the issue is unable to be resolved prior to dispatch, hand cancellation must be used as a contingency.

Each originating plant should keep a supply of manual date stamps to hand-cancel any return ballots that do not receive a postmark (or a legible postmark) during automated processing operations. The stamp should be updated to the current date each day at the designated rollover time (06:59), and not before. The quality of the postmark should be checked to ensure the date is legible. If a ballot already has a postmark, do not apply a second.

Every effort should be made to postmark any uncanceled ballots in the originating operation, including by hand-cancellation. If any unpostmarked ballots are found in the destinating operation after such ballots have gone through the originating operation, a postmark should not be applied to those ballots. This is because the postmark is the Postal Service's official statement of the date on which it accepted custody of a mailpiece, and a destinating operation cannot reliably make that determination after the mailpiece has gone through the originating operation.

For additional guidance, please see the Election Mail and Political Mail Processing Operations Management Order, corresponding Service Talks, SWIs, and SUTs, and the 2022 General Election Extraordinary Measures Memorandum. These documents can also be found on the Election Mail Blue page.

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Postmark of Election Ballots

From now through the general election on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, we can expect to process a high volume of ballot mail. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed, so it is essential that every returning ballot gets a legible postmark with the correct date - meaning the date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot. This is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted. The following are areas to monitor and processes that must be in place and followed for each ballot mail type:

Ballots - Flats

- Direct to AFSM100 console with canceller capability.
- Manual Case: Postmark uncanceled volumes, including metered and BRM.

Ballots - Letters

- All Ballots must be processed and cancelled on AFCS/AFCS200.
- AFCS Bin 12 from Operation 004 must be rerun once, then properly handled as a manual reject. All ballots, including metered and BRM, must be hand-cancelled.
- Ballots from AFCS flat extractor must be hand-cancelled or flow to AFSM100 canceller.
- Trayed ballots must be processed on AFCS/AFCS200. **Do not take directly to DIOSS.**
- Manual Case: Rejects from the fine cull, flat extractor, and AFCS rejects must receive a postmark, to include metered and BRM.

Ballots - Priority Express/Priority

- All ballots must have postmark validated.
- Postmark uncanceled volumes, including metered and BRM.

Ballots - Irregulars

- Watch for ballots mailed in irregular envelopes.
- Postmark uncanceled volumes, including metered and BRM.

Each facility must also **certify** that their manual operations have a **Round-Date Hand Cancellor** and ensure that the date is updated correctly and verified each day.

Important: *If a ballot already has a postmark, do not apply a second postmark. Every effort should be made to postmark any uncanceled ballots in the outgoing operation, including by hand-cancellation. If any unpostmarked ballots are found in the destinating operation after such ballots have gone through the outgoing operation, a postmark should not be applied to those ballots.*

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Military and Overseas Absentee Ballots

This election season, the Military Postal Service, Department of Defense, and USPS, are combining efforts to expedite the delivery of absentee ballots to and from military personnel and citizens residing in foreign countries. The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE Act) and Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) provide a general standard for how the USPS handles military and overseas ballots. The following is a quick summary of the USPS policy on military and overseas absentee ballots based on the DMM, UOCAVA, and the MOVE Act:

- Balloting materials for elections for federal office may be sent through the mail without prepayment of postage to enable individuals to participate in the electoral process where they are otherwise eligible to vote and are (1) in active service in the Uniformed Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and commissioned corps of the Public Health Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration); (2) in the Merchant Marines; (3) a spouse or dependent of a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marines; or (4) a United States citizen residing outside the United States.
- Qualifying mailpieces may be mailed without prepayment of postage by depositing them in the domestic mailstream or mailing them from an overseas U.S. military Post Office (APO/FPO), a Diplomatic Post Office (DPO), or an American Embassy or American Consulate.
- Policy applies to the following elections: general, primary, and special elections for Federal office
- States are generally required to mail absentee ballots to military and overseas voters no later than 45 days before a federal election (September 24 is 45 days before the November 8 election).
- Priority Mail Express service Label 11-DoD may be utilized by absent overseas uniformed services voters when mailed from a Military Post Office, a Diplomatic Post Office, or Department of State locations
- Ballots sent to eligible voters with the "39 U.S.C. 3406" indicia do not require postage and are not short paid (DMM 703.8.0)
- Ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment (POM 171.3)
- Acceptance clerks and retail associates must accept this mail
- This mail does not have to be submitted to a BMEU
- Ballots not covered by this policy require postage prior to mailing, but **do not detain** due to short-paid postage.



Absentee Ballot with 39 USC 3406 in Postage Box



Absentee Ballot with Priority Mail Express Label

The following identifying mark may also be present on all absentee ballots.



Processing Operations Management Order

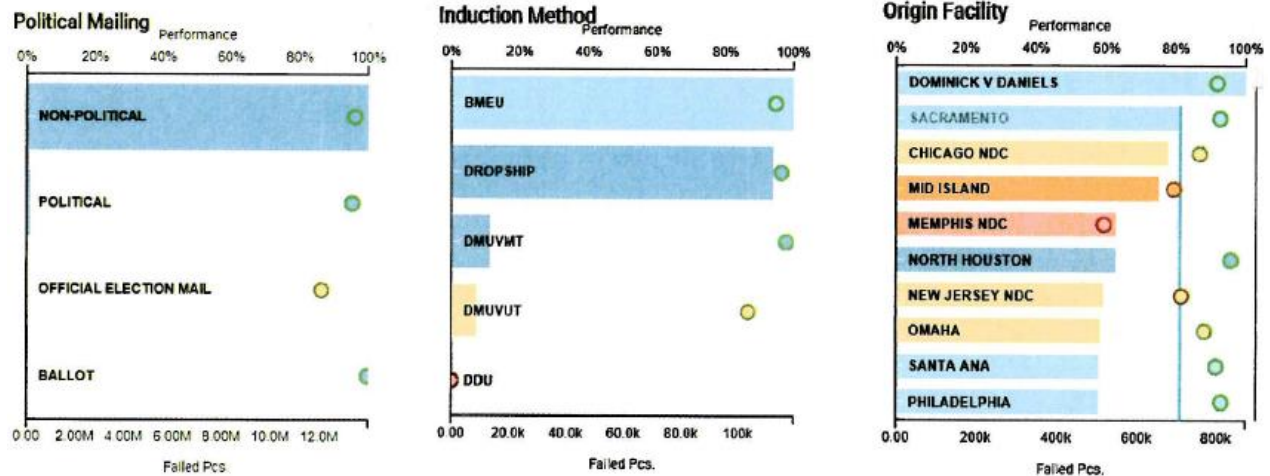
Election Mail Tracking

Internally, the two tools to ensure visibility are Informed Visibility (IV) and Mail History Tracking System (MHTS). If 1Mb or STID information is available for the returning ballots, MHTS will be used to determine where the ballots are in the mailstream and to diagnose problems that may arise during the ballot mail flow process. Each division should have an MHTS SME who can drill into the tool for appropriate mail flow diagnosis.

IV with Political Mail Options

- Service Scores
- Tracking and Diagnostic Tools -Drill Down





Mail Condition Visualization

HQ Option lines will be turned on to monitor daily Political/Election Mail conditions at all facilities. The following rules apply (subject to change). There will be a separate instruction distributed prior to implementation for the following condition reporting:

- ELECTION MAIL ON HAND & DELAYED VOLUME REPORTING
- POLITICAL MAIL ON HAND & DELAYED VOLUME REPORTING
- BALLOT NOTIFICATION & COUNT REPORTING
- LATE ENTRY ELECTION MAIL AND LATE ENTRY POLITICAL MAIL

Each reporting option will have a specific criterion for counting associated with it. ALL FACILITIES WILL BE REQUIRED TO REPORT. A negative report will be required. Below is a preliminary description of the option lines.

MCV - Line Items for Political/Election Mail, Ballots, and Late Entry

Facility Type	Category	Sub Category	MCVREPORTING CATEGORY	Pieces				Containers			
				OH-Pieces	ADV-Pieces	DMF-Pieces	DI-Pieces	OH-Containers	LA-Containers	DD-Containers	LD-Containers
ALL	Election Mail	Ballot Notification/Count Reporting	MANUAL INPUT ONLY	1	0	0	688	0	0	0	0
ALL	Election Mail	Late Entry Election Mail Volume Repo	MANUAL INPUT ONLY	100	0	0	68	0	0	0	0
ALL	Election Mail	Election Mail On Hand & Delayed	MANUAL INPUT ONLY	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALL	Political Mail	Late Entry Political Mail Volume Repo	MANUAL INPUT ONLY	1	0	0	1589	0	0	0	0
ALL	Political Mail	Political Mail On Hand & Delayed	MANUAL INPUT ONLY	10900	0	0	231	0	0	0	0

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Election Mail and Political Mail Organization

Within Operations, each Division and Plant has an Operations Coordinator who will be responsible for their Division and Plant Election Mail and Political Mail processing operational issues that may arise during the Election Mail and Political Mail season. The coordinators will be responsible for implementing, monitoring, communicating, and acting as the liaison for operations with HQ and Election and Government Mail Services, and Customer Relations. The Operations Coordinators will partner with Managers of Customer Relations to resolve mail processing issues raised by mailers and state or local election officials. Other responsibilities include:

1. Serving as Processing Operations Point of Contact for each Election Mail Strike Team
 - Division Processing Operations Coordinators are primary points of contact for Customer Relations Managers
 - Plant Processing Operations Coordinators are local contacts for District Strike Teams
 - Advising District Strike Team of Election Mail and Political Mail issues
2. Communicating to all processing operations employees (consistent messaging)
 - Issuing standardized employee talks
 - Performance measurement results
 - Maintain/monitor problems/issues log and resolution
3. Implementing standard operation procedures (POMO/SOP/Service talks)
 - Utilizing past best practices
 - Refining processes where needed
4. Ongoing monitoring of inventories
 - Tracking entered volumes to ensure on-time delivery
 - Ensuring volumes can meet required delivery dates
 - Monitoring Election Mail and Political Mail tracking and performance via MHTS and IV

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Compliance Audit - Election Mail and Political Mail

The compliance audit below is a self-audit that must be completed daily by the BMEU and Mail Processing. Though this is a self-audit, HQ and Division may ask for copies of the last day's audit to review. The audit below is a sample of what is available on the file. **This log can be found on the Election Mail and Political Mail website and should be primary resource of this audit template.**

Political/Election Mail AM/PM All Clear Certification

During the period preceding local, state, and national primaries, special elections, and general elections, the Postal Service accepts and delivers many political campaign mailings, frequently in large quantities. These mailings are sent by or on behalf of individual candidates and their campaign organizations, as well as by local, state, and national committees of political parties. There are also large numbers of ballots and other Election Mail mailed out to local and military voters, as well as ballot applications and completed ballots mailed by voters to their election officials. The Postal Service is responsible for properly handling this volume.

To ensure that we are delivering these mailings to and from the American voters in an efficient and timely manner, the Postal Service will be requiring all delivery units and processing facilities to certify, on a daily basis, that their unit is clear of all Political & Election mail committed for delivery that day. This means the carrier cases, clerk distribution cases, staging areas, the dock(s), the window area, all delivery vehicles, all processing areas and trailers need to be checked. **This reporting will begin nationally for all state and federal offices on April 15th and continue until November 30, 2022**

When required, ALL CLEAR certifications are to be completed as follows:

- Processing Operations AM Certification is due by 10:00 am local time.
- Retail and Delivery AM Certification is due by 10:00 am local time.
- Retail and Delivery PM Certification is due by Close of Business

The Political/ Election Mail All Clear Certification link for Retail and Delivery Units has been separated into two certifications, AM and PM

Go to the Election Mail Facility Certification Blue Share page at this link:

<https://facilitycerts.usps.gov/login/loginPrompt.cfm>

Certification of Communication

The following documents must be shared and communicated to ALL employees. Upon completion, each plant manager must certify that the POMOs and Service talks have been communicated:

1. POMO - 001-22 Election Mail and Political Mail Policies and Procedures (this document)
2. Operational Checklists
 - a. Election Mail and Political Mail Audit Checklist
 - b. Operational Clean Sweep Search Checklist
3. Political Mail Service Talks (see appendix)
 - a. Business Reply Mail-Election Day Processing
 - b. No Voter-Returned Ballots in PARS
 - c. Processing Political Mail
 - d. Empty Equipment Search and Tag 57/191 Handling
 - e. Processing Mixed Outgoing Election Mail
 - f. Hand Cancellation Stamp
 - g. Hand Cancellation Quality



This is a fluid list that will increase during the season. As new POMOs and talks are developed, this POMO will be updated and will be communicated to all our Customer Relations Managers and Operations Political Coordinators. Talks can be found on the Election Mail website:

<https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/electionmail/>

Election Mail and Political Mail Audit Checklist

The checklist below should be used by CPDO managers and/or supervisors and completed as a part of the requirement to certify that mail processing facilities are in compliance with all Election Mail and Political Mail policies and operational requirements. An excel version of this checklist can be found on the Election Mail and Political Mail page on Blue at:

<https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/product-solutions/electionmail/field-playbook-checklists.htm>

Election Mail and Political Mail Audit Checklist				
  	Facility NAME/Auditor's NAME: 			
Enter responses in spaces provided. Any Y/N question answered as "No" requires an entry in section 31 below.				
General Information / Communication: (TO BE COMPLETED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE PROCESSING WINDOW)				
1 MGMT - Has the site certified that ALL Service Talks and POMOs were shared with ALL employees?	Yes	No	N/A	
2 OPS - Was the daily all clear check completed and certified after each tour and end of day on the website?	Yes	No	N/A	
3 OPS - Is there a designated Political and Election Mail Staging area?	Yes	No	N/A	
4 OPS - Is the staging space clearly identified with proper lines and signs?	Yes	No	N/A	
5 OPS - Does the plant have Political and Election mail properly staged in the designated staging area as applicable?	Yes	No	N/A	
6 OPS - Was the Political and Election mail correctly reported on the appropriate MCV Manual Line item?	Yes	No	N/A	
7 OPS - Is ALL Election mail being cancelled on the AFCs, AFSMs or hand cancellation?	Yes	No	N/A	
8 OPS - Has operations correctly documented their Political and Election Mail arrivals into the P/E log?	Yes	No	N/A	
9 OPS - Are all P/E mail alerts being shared and documented in the log upon arrival?	Yes	No	N/A	
10 OPS - Are all containers with P/E mail properly identified indicating that there is P/E mail in that container?	Yes	No	N/A	
11 OPS - Have the POMOs and Service talks been posted on the workroom floor?	Yes	No	N/A	
12 OPS - Are the employees knowledgeable about the POMOs and Service Talks for Political and Election Mail?	Yes	No	N/A	
13 OPS - Are the BRM Political and Election Mail procedures being followed?	Yes	No	N/A	
14 OPS - Are the POSTAGE DUE Election Mail procedures being followed - DELIVER THE MAIL/DO NOT RTS?	Yes	No	N/A	
15 OPS - Do the employees know what to do with a container with a Tag 5T or 131?	Yes	No	N/A	
16 OPS - Does the site know how to handle the Military/Overseas/Absentee ballots?	Yes	No	N/A	
17 OPS - Have manual operations including Shortpaid, Damaged mail and PARS been swept for all P/E mail?	Yes	No	N/A	
18 OPS - Have trailer yard checks being completed in each tour including trailers at the dock?	Yes	No	N/A	
19 OPS/BMEU - Do the OPS and BMEU teams meet to compare and validate the Political and Election mail logs?	Yes	No	N/A	
20 BMEU - Is the BMEU Political and Election mail logs up to date and current?	Yes	No	N/A	
21 IPS - Is IV reviewed daily to assess Political and Election Mail Performance?	Yes	No	N/A	
22 IPS - Did IPS audit the MCV counts and validate the counts and oldest dates on the floor?	Yes	No	N/A	
23 IPS - Are mail conditions and All Clear certification being reviewed and discussed at the daily tour turnover meetings?	Yes	No	N/A	
24 IPS - Is IPS reviewing Election Mail ballot envelopes that reject from the AFCs and communicating findings to the District Strike Team?	Yes	No	N/A	
25 COORDINATOR - Does the site have a local Political and Election mail plan?	Yes	No	N/A	
26 COORDINATOR - Does the local P/E mail plan include a contingency plan to get LAMM and delayed P/E mail delivered to the customer?	Yes	No	N/A	
27 COORDINATOR - Does the plant and District Strike Team meet regularly?	Yes	No	N/A	
28 COORDINATOR - Are all issues being entered with detailed documentation in the HQ Issue Log?	Yes	No	N/A	
29 COORDINATOR - Are the issues/problems from Electionmail.org being resolved within 24 hrs (where applicable)?	Yes	No	N/A	
31 For any "No" response in the Y/N items, provide the changes necessary to abate the issue below and when that action will be completed:				

Operational Clean Sweep Search Checklist Political and Election Mail

The checklist below may be used by CPDO employees conducting ALL CLEARS to assist in their effort to clear all mail processing facilities of Election Mail and Political Mail on a daily basis is thorough and complete.

District: _____ **Date:** _____ **Name:** _____

Title: _____ **Phone#:** _____

Check box when checked	Section/Operation: <i>Defines the work area to be searched.</i>	Comments: <i>Specifics: include copies of PMOD label and /or container placard. Names of individuals contacted</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incoming dock	
<input type="checkbox"/>	BMEU & BMEU Plant Staging	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opening Units	
<input type="checkbox"/>	AO / Station dispatch area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outbound dock	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outgoing Dispatch Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trailers in the yard (Yard Check)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	MTE Plant Staging Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	MTE Trailers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site MTE SC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARS Staging and Operations	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rewrap Operations	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CFS (if applicable)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	BRM/Postage Due	

Auditor _____ **Position** _____

Date _____

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Stand-Up Talk Business Reply Mail - Election Day Processing

Each election cycle, the Postal Service plays a key role in the electoral process. Our role in this process continues to grow as the volume of election mail is increasing. The processing and delivery of election related mail is critical to the American democratic process. Because of its importance, we must be diligent in how we handle this mail.

Our discussion today will focus on Election Day processing of Election Mail Business Reply Mail. On election night (i.e. Nov. 8, 2022), after the final sweeps of Post Offices and plant locations are made, allow the election officials in each state or the District of Columbia to collect any late-arriving Business Reply Mail ballots. The time of the last "sweep" will depend on the state's return deadline on Election Day, but is typically between 7:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

All Business Reply Mail will be made available to the appropriate election office for collection from their PO Boxes or via Caller Service pickup -- even if the BRM mail has not been invoiced.

The clerk will: 1. Count the mailpieces, 2. Document the mail volume that the election official is taking, and 3. Make two photocopies of the completed PS Form 4830-B

- For PS Form 4830-B:
 - o Document the election office's BRM permit number and number of pieces they are taking
 - o For "Reason Mail Not Processed," state "Election Day *final sweep*"
 - o Give one copy to the BRM Manager
 - o Give one copy to the BRM supervisor or manager, or to the acceptance clerk who will post the mail volume to the permit account the next business day

This process is financially compliant for partisan and non-partisan elections.

Please be on the alert for Election Mail throughout the entire election season. Again, Election Mail should be expedited through the network with timely processing.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to providing a successful election season.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® MAIL NOT PROCESSED

MAIL NOT PROCESSED

Business Reply Mail / Postage Due / Merchandise Return Service

Date Delivered to Location: _____

Reason Mail Not Processed: _____

Type of Container: _____
(Example: 11-Piece or 15-Piece Letter Tray, Back, etc.)

Description of Contents: _____
(Postage Due Letter Mail, Postage Due Mail, etc.)

USPS Employee Initials: _____

DO NOT DELIVER THIS MAIL UNTIL INVOICED

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Stand-Up Talk: No Voter-Returned Ballots in PARS

With the 2022 elections fast approaching, ballot mail volume is on the rise. Our customers are depending on USPS to expeditiously deliver all voter-returned ballots to ensure the integrity of the election.

Voter-returned ballots are addressed to election jurisdictions and should never be return-to-sender. It is critical that they are processed in the regular mailstream and do not end up in PARS. This requires vigilance in all steps of the process:

- Delivery must ensure ballots are prepped with stamped mail. Do not hold out separately or tray up with metered mail. For extra security, sleeve or lid PARS mail to avoid comingling.
- Employees working in the collection operation or plant carwash must look out for any ballot mail and ensure it flows with the stamped mailstream.
- Employees prepping PARS and FPARS must check for any voter-returned ballots and redirect as necessary.
- Manual case employees should check RTS (return-to-sender) volumes for any voter-returned ballots and redirect as necessary.

Any mailpiece design or barcode issues should be reported to the appropriate subject matter expert on the local District Election Mail Strike Team.



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Stand-Up Talk: Processing Political Mail

From now until the general election on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, we can expect to process a high volume of Political Mail as the campaign season intensifies. Today, I am sharing information from the *Postal Operations Manual* (POM) section 492, and mailers' use of PS Tag 57, *Political Campaign Mailing*, that identifies Political Mail for processing and distribution.

First, let's define a political mailing, which is distinct from Election Mail. Political Mail can be Political Campaign Mail or Political Message Mail. Political Campaign Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail postage rates for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, a campaign committee, or a committee of a political party. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate's campaign committee or political party committee as the return address. Political Message Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices by a PAC, super-PAC, or other organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Now, let's familiarize ourselves with PS Tag 57. "Political Campaign Mailing" is printed on the red tag. Six black stars are above and below those words. Use of Tag 57 with eligible political mailings is optional. Tag 57 may be used for all Political Mail, including Political Message Mail. Please remove Tag 57 from trays after the campaign mail has been processed.

The Postal Service is responsible for providing information to assist in the preparation and deposit of political mailings, as well as for the proper acceptance, processing, delivery, and recording of these mailings. Our job is to ensure that each mailing is handled properly and with equal care and attention. Any delay in processing political mailings must be documented. Be alert for the red Tag 57. We must properly handle and timely deliver any political mailing.

In summary, the key points from today's service talk are:

- We will handle all political mailings properly and timely.
Be alert to the red Tag 57, even though its use is optional for eligible mailers.
- Tag 57 must be removed once the political mail has been processed.
- Any delays in processing of political mail must be reported.

One of the most important public functions for the Postal Service is serving as a trusted partner in our nation's electoral process. Thank you for keeping our country strong by ensuring messages from registered political candidates, committees, parties, and other issue advocacy groups are processed in a timely manner so they can be delivered to America's voter.

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Stand-Up Talk: Empty Equipment Search and Tag 57/191 Handling

As the 2022 Election season gets underway, it is crucial that all political and election mail pieces are delivered timely. Some pieces may be overlooked due to being stuck in equipment that appears to be empty. We must avoid this at all costs by performing a thorough empty equipment search.

Once a piece of equipment has been emptied, it should be inspected visually and physically for any residual mailpieces. Sacks should be turned inside-out, trays and tubs should be turned upside-down, hampers should be swept out, etc.

Some pieces of equipment have a false bottom (i.e. trays or tubs are placed in the bottom of a container to make it easier to reach the contents of the container). These types of containers are especially prone to hidden mailpieces. Check for any mailpieces that may be lying underneath the false bottom. In addition, empty equipment must not be returned to a Mail Transport Equipment Service Center (MTEC) with a red Political Mail Tag 57 or green Ballot Mail Tag 191 attached. These tags must be removed from the tray/tub/sack as soon as the mail in the container is processed. Do not dispose of the tags; return them to the local Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) for reuse



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Stand-Up Talk: Processing Mixed Outgoing Election Mail

Each Election season, voters and election officials count on the Postal Service to deliver Election Mail as expeditiously as possible. Official Election Mail includes mail-in ballots sent to or from domestic, overseas, and military voters, as well as ballot materials, voter registration cards, ballot applications, and polling place notifications.

Any facility receiving outbound Election Mail to voters in mixed outgoing (MXD or OMX) trays/tubs should process it as First-Class Mail (FCM), regardless of the class in which it is entered (Marketing Mail, Non-Profit, etc.). Mail processing facilities will establish identified containers in their opening units (Collection Platform, Inbound Dock, BMEU, 010, etc.) to isolate and identify all bundles, trays, or sacks of outbound Election Mail received.

Processing facilities will containerize Election Mail letters and flats in separate containers, with letter mail containers flowed directly to the outgoing FCM primary letter operations (DBCS/DIOSS 271, 481, 891, etc.) and flat mail flowed directly to the outgoing FCM primary flat operations (AFSM 141, 331, 461, etc.). If no automated/mechanized equipment is available, the volumes will be processed in the outgoing FCM manual letter operation or outgoing FCM manual flat operation. DO NOT induct letter trays or flat trays of Election Mail across tray sorters, ATUs, Gantry robots, or TMS. Election Mail volumes will be isolated, identified, and flowed directly to the FCM outgoing distribution operation.

Any facility receiving Election Mail volume where there are no outgoing FCM letter or flat operations (destination plants, NDCs, separate BMEUs, etc.) will identify and containerize the Election Mail as FCM and route the container to their designated outgoing processing facility on the next available trip for distribution.

Any Network Distribution Center (NDC) receiving Election Mail will isolate the Election Mail for processing as First-Class Mail (FCM), regardless of class. NOC will establish identified containers in their opening units (Inbound Dock, BMEU, etc.) to isolate and identify all bundles, trays (extracted from MXD NDC Pallets), or sacks of Election Mail received. Each facility will identify and containerize the Election Mail as FCM and route the container to their designated outgoing processing facility on the next available trip for distribution. DO NOT mix Election Mail with other classes of mail (Marketing Mail, Package Services, etc.) when dispatching to the outgoing processing facility.

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Stand-Up Talk: Hand Cancellation Stamp

Ballot Mail volume has increased in recent years, and we can expect to process a high volume of ballot mail in the 2022 Election season. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed, so it is essential that every returning ballot gets a postmark with the correct date- meaning the date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot. Stamped and metered letters and flats, BRM, Express/Priority/SPRs, and all manual mail should all be postmarked where they contain a return ballot. This is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted.

Each plant should keep a supply of manual date stamps to postmark any uncanceled volumes during origin processing. The stamp should be updated to the current date each day at the designated rollover time (06:59), and not before. Uncanceled volumes may come from, but are not limited to:

- AFCS fine cull
- AFCS flat extractor
- AFSM rejects
- Oversized flats
- Manual case
- Package sorters

DO NOT apply a second postmark if a ballot already has a postmark.

Every effort should be made to postmark any uncanceled ballots in the outgoing operation, including by hand- cancellation. If any unpostmarked ballots are found in the destinating operation after such ballots have gone through the outgoing operation, a postmark should not be applied to those ballots. This is because the postmark is the Postal Service's official statement of the date on which it accepted custody of a mailpiece, and a destinating operation cannot reliably make that determination after the mailpiece has gone through the outgoing operation.

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Stand-Up Talk: Hand Cancellation Quality

Ballot Mail volume has increased in recent years, and we expect that large numbers of election officials and voters will continue using the mail as part of the electoral process this year. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return ballot was timely mailed, so it is essential that every returning ballot gets a postmark with the correct date - meaning the date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot. This is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received by a certain later date in order to be counted.

Each plant should keep a supply of manual date stamps to postmark any uncanceled volumes during origin processing. The stamp should be updated to the current date each day at the designated rollover time (06:59), and not before. **The quality of the postmark should be checked to ensure the date is legible.** This is essential to help ensure ballots can be counted. If there is an issue with stamp quality, use a backup stamp or replenish the ink in the stamp.

ADDITIONAL ELECTION MAIL AND POLITICAL MAIL RESOURCES

Election and Government Mail Services Blue Page:

<https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/electionmail/welcome.htm>

CPDO Election Mail and Political Mail Processing Operations Management Order ([POMO](#))

Business Mail Acceptance Election Mail and Political Mail Blue Page: [Political Mail / Official Election Mail \(usps.gov\)](#)

CRDO Election Mail Learn and Grow Presentations and CPDO Election Mail Education Series Presentations: <https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/product-solutions/electionmail/education-series-resource-library.htm>

Election Mail Page on USPS.com: <https://about.usps.com/what/government-services/election-mail/>

Ticket Management System- Election Mail: <https://electionmail.org/>

Political Mail - Deliver the Win®: <https://www.deliverthewin.com/>

Political Mail Ticket Management System: <https://politicalmail.usps.gov/>